THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

CATHOLICISM, MILIEU AND MORALITY IN NOVELS OF HEINRICH BÖLL

BY

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled CATHOLICISM, MILIEU AND MORALITY IN NOVELS OF HEINRICH BÖLL submitted by G. M. Ditzian in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Heinrich Böll is a committed artist in the sense that he writes from moral conviction. For he criticises contemporary society - both secular and ecclesiastic - from a moral point of view, particularly deploring the involvement of the church in secular power politics and its lack of spirituality: its "milieu-Catholicism" (after Carl Amery).

On examination of the six novels discussed (Wo warst du, Adam?, Und sagte kein einziges Wort, Haus ohne Hüter, Billiard um halb zehn, Ansichten eines Clowns and Gruppenbild mit Dame), characters representative of "milieu-Catholicism" demonstrate involvement in a cult of religious aestheticism, affiliation with certain political parties and a concern with dogma rather than in the practice of religious principles in daily life.

The characteristics glaringly absent in the "milieu-Catholic" - spirituality, brotherhood, an innate goodness of character demonstrated in acts of kindness towards others - are found in the portrayal of Böll's individual, the human being who barely manages to exist in the contemporary society Böll depicts.

The individual is in a constant state of conflict with milieu, highlighted by Böll in situations of direct confront-

ation. Though always the victim, the under-dog, persecuted, tormented and intimidated by his hostile environment, Böll's individual never conforms to the ambivalent standards of society. His natural moral integrity remains intact even though his existence is threatened.

By tracing in this way the development of Böll's theme of morality in his novels over a twenty-year period, one is aware of the increasing need he sees for social change. Whereas in the past his individual passively succumbed to his wretched earthly existence, looking towards death as a release in the hope of spiritual salvation in an afterlife; in his more recent novels Böll advocates the practical rebellion of the individual toward a social revolution which he sees as the only hope for the survival of mankind.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGR	American-German Review
BA	Books Abroad
BJA	British Journal of Aesthetics (London)
DLZ	Deutsche Literarische Zeitschrift
DS	Deutsche Studien
DU	Der Deutschunterricht
FH	Frankfurter Hefte
GLL	German Life and Letters
GQ	German Quarterly
KuL	Kunst und Literatur
Lit. Por.	Literarische Portraits
MLN	Modern Language Notes
Monat	Der Monat
MSpr	Moderna språk
NDH	Neue Deutsche Hefte
NDL	Neue Deutsche Literatur
Päd. Prov.	Pädagogische Provinzen
PMLA	Publications of the Modern Languages Association of America
SM	Sammlung Metzler
SuF	Sinn und Form
SZ	Stimmen der Zeit
TK	Text und Kritik
WB	Weimarer Beiträge
WW	Wirkendes Wort
ZfG	Zeitschrift für Germanisten

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INTRODUCTION

Heinrich Böll occupies a prominent place in twentieth-century German literature. He has the reputation of being among the most widely-read and successful writers of today, both in Germany and - in numerous translations - on the international scene. Moreover, he is the holder of many literary prizes - from his earliest, the prize of the literary "Gruppe 47" for the short story Die schwarzen Schafe (1951), to his most recent award of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1972 following the appearance of the novel Gruppenbild mit Dame.

Nevertheless Böll is a controversial figure in the realm of literary criticism. His reception by critics is unusually varied. It ranges from the overwhelming enthusiasm of Theodor Ziolkowski to the more negative scepticism of W. J. Schwarz. Already in 1960 Ziolkowski made the prediction: "Böll is today perhaps the most promising writer in Germany - if one can still speak of promise when it has so nearly been fulfilled."[1] More recently Ziolkowski maintained that Böll had not only added a new province of his own to the literary map of Germany, but had also established himself as the leading fictional historian of Germany.[2] In contrast to this, Schwarz made the comment eight

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[1]Theodore Ziolkowski, "Heinrich Böll: Conscience and Craft," in BA, XXXIV (1960), p.222.

[2]Theodore Ziolkowski, "The Inner Veracity of Form," in BA, XLVII (1973), p.17.

years ago that Heinrich Böll had probably already outlived his glory.[3] Even in 1973, when the events of the previous year had seemingly proved his prognosis false, Schwarz does not retract his earlier judgement but merely proceeds more carefully: "Es ist sicher verfrüht, schon heute ein endgültiges Urteil über Bölls Gesamtwerk zu formulieren. Wohl nirgends hat Böll das Format von zeitgenössischen Schriftstellern wie Günter Grass, Uwe Johnson oder Martin Walser erreicht. Dass ihn sein heutiger Ruhm überdauern wird, ist nicht sehr wahrscheinlich."[4] Böll claims to be unmoved by criticism of his work by others, as each completed work has already been subjected to several stages of private criticism (and amendment), not the least important of which has been self-criticism. For Böll criticism cannot be taken too seriously since it is only seldom that the individual critic's criteria are known: "Es gibt wenige Kritiker - im Augenblick kenne ich fast gar keinen - , dessen Massstab ich kenne oder ihn mir bekannt gäbe."[5] This sentiment is unmistakably shared by Arnold when he states: "So ist das eben mit der Kritik: schon pluralistisch desorientiert bietet sie durch die verschiedenen Federn verschiedener Kritiker jedem Jedes, ohne dass die es für nötig erachtete, die Grundlagen ihrer

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[3] W. J. Schwarz, "Heinrich Böll," in Christliche Dichter im 20. Jahrhundert, Bern, 1968, p.432.

[4] W. J. Schwarz, Der Erzähler Heinrich Böll, Bern, 1973, p.51.

[5] Heinrich Böll, Im Gespräch mit Heinz Ludwig Arnold, München, 1971, p.29.

Urteile an den Leser weiterzugeben, sich also zu explizieren."[6]

With this in mind, it is interesting to note the reaction of critics, including the international press, to the awarding of the Nobel Prize to Böll. Though no-one would dispute the writer's merit to the award, Ziolkowski found it necessary to defend Böll the artist's claim as a result of a critical response evaluating Böll's success on a largely non-literary level, attributing the award to "political and human"[7] principles. This point of view could also be detected in Uwe Johnson's reply in a radio interview[8], that Böll justly deserved the prize for promoting understanding of the Germans in the war years. (Perhaps it should be mentioned here that Johnson himself, together with Günter Grass, was rumoured to be under consideration for the same award.)

There is some justification, however, to the conflicting views on Böll if only on account of the dualism in his purpose. Böll the author tells a story while Böll the moralist incorporates into this tale his social, political and ecclesiastical attacks, clothing them sometimes in the literary garb of satire, caricature, gentle humour, irony or symbolism. Böll appears to

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[6]H. L. Arnold, "Heinrich Bölls Roman Gruppenbild mit Dame," in TuK, XXXIII (1972/73), p.45/46.

[7]Theodore Ziolkowski, op. cit., p.24.

[8]Uwe Johnson, Portrait of an Artist: Heinrich Böll, CBC Radio, June, 1974.

be most comfortable with the short-story form. Even to Schwarz he is "ein geborener Erzähler"[9]. His novels elicit less praise, however. Schwarz maintains that Böll's novels have nothing of the grand epic breadth of other modern authors like Plevier.[10] Similarly Kalow misses the "Feueratem"[11] of the Erzählung Der Zug war pünktlich in the novels of Böll, and Rang concurs in this opinion by stating of the novel Billiard um halb zehn: " ... es fehlt ihm der grosse Atem des Epischen."[12]

Yet as far as Böll's language is concerned, critics are uniform in praise of Böll's style of writing. This must be gratifying to an author to whom the word has a sacred value and to whom the writer, as Böll states, is one who guards and defends "die Würde des Menschen im Wort."[13] Yuill describes Böll's idiom as "at any rate not obscure or difficult: 'workmanlike' might be the best word to describe it."[14] It is for this reason

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[9]W. J. Schwarz, op. cit., p.12.

[10]Ibid., p.13.

[11]Gert Kalow, "Heinrich Böll," in Christliche Dichter im 20. Jahrhundert, Heidelberg, 1955, p.428.

[12]Bernhard Rang, "Die deutsche Epik des 20. Jährhundert," in Deutsche Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert, Vol. I, Bern, 1967, p.87.

[13]Heinrich Böll, "Die Sprache als Hort der Freiheit," in Hierzulande: Aufsätze zur Zeit, München, 1964, p.115. This work will be cited hereafter as Aufsätze.

[14]W. E. Yuill, "Heinrich Böll," in German Men of Letters, IV (1966), p.155.

that Böll has so often been compared to Hemingway. For example, Kalow uses the term "Bölls stilistischer Amerikanismus"[15] to describe his style. It is hardly surprising though, for Böll as "Anwalt der Armen"[16] is writing about the ordinary man in ordinary language. There is nothing pretentious about Böll's style. His colloquial expression makes his work more convincing as he writes in an unemotional way, aiming at sobriety of tone and avoiding the extravagant. The result is very often that in his attempt to stick to and report the bare facts, his prose has the simplicity of a chronicle.

Indeed in the novel Gruppenbild mit Dame Böll consciously assumes the role of a reporter and builds the whole structure of the work around a series of interviews of a host of various characters. It is from "evidence" supplied by these subsidiary figures that the "reporter" gathers facts which, when pieced together, gradually form the "portrait" of Leni Gruyten. This illustrates the importance of multi-perspectivism to the structure of Böll's work.

In many of his other novels - most notably in Und sagte kein einziges Wort, Billiard um halb zehn and Ansichten eines Clowns - not only is point of view vital to the form but,

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[15]Gert Kalow, op. cit., p.426.

[16]Adolf Wendel, Heinrich Böll: ein christlicher Dichter unserer Tage, (manuscript), Südwestfunk, Baden-Baden, 13. 7. 56., p.6.

according to Sokel[17], it often takes on the character of the inner monologue, reminiscent of Joyce in almost verging on the stream of consciousness.

By far Böll's most ambitious and complex work as far as structure is concerned is the novel Billiard um halb zehn. It is concisely summed up by Yuill: "Here the author steps outside the bounds of a single generation and from the vantage point of a single day constructs a story of multiple perspectives scanning the history of the Fähmel family over half a century as recorded in the memories of the main characters."[18] The time element affects the construction of the novel, as the plot constantly moves back and forth between events of the past and present. Memory is vital to the structure, as it is through memory that the past becomes present: "In der Erinnerung sind die Ereignisse jederzeit gegenwärtig und miteinander vertauschbar."[19] The story is constructed around Robert Fähmel's almost ritualistic daily game of billiards. This serves to transport him back to the past as he confides his memories to the page-boy, Hugo, at the hotel. Robert lives a perfunctory existence in society, to whose standards he cannot conform, and his real

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[17]W. H. Sokel, "Perspective and Dualism in the Novels of Heinrich Böll," in The Contemporary Novel in German, Texas, 1967, p.9.

[18]W. E. Yuill, op. cit., p.146.

[19]Therese Poser, "Heinrich Bölls Billiard um halb zehn," in Möglichkeiten des modernen deutschen Romans, Giessen, 1965, p.248.

world - at billiards - is that of memory. Similarly, memory represents the real world for Johanna Fähmel, her whole existence at the sanitarium spent in keeping alive memory of fascist violence in order to avenge the death of its victims. Further, Böll uses the technique of memory in this novel to provide the background to the growth of the Fähmel family legend of prosperity by having the eighty-year-old Heinrich Fähmel reminisce and recount his life-story to the secretary Leonore. Among other examples of this device are: Schrella, on his return from exile, being haunted by memories of past terror; and Marianne's story to Joseph Fähmel of her vivid memory of being saved at the last moment as a small child from the atrocities of her murderous Nazi parents.

The epical use of memory is by no means a new phenomenon in Böll's work. Elements of it can be found in Und sagte kein einziges Wort and even more markedly in Haus ohne Hüter. The importance of past detail stored up in memory forms a kind of leitmotiv throughout Böll's novels and can best be expressed in the author's words: "Es ist unsere Aufgabe, daran zu erinnern, dass die Zerstörungen in unserer Welt nicht nur äusserer Art sind und nicht so geringfügiger Natur, dass man sich anmassen kann, sie in wenigen Jahren zu heilen."[20]

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[20]Heinrich Böll, "Das Auge des Schriftstellers," in Aufsätze, p.150.

Therese Poser sees the world of memory as serving a technical connective purpose.[21] This is an instance of the striking harmony of form with content in Böll's work. As has been discussed already, Böll's very style of writing is an essential part of the content. The simple language he uses is not just a matter of artistic form but is also inherent in reflecting the nature of his heroes who are for the most part among the not-so-well-educated, simple, "little" men in society.

As far as the actual content of his work is concerned, Böll is to a great extent drawing on his own experience. Both the Erzählung Der Zug war pünktlich and the novel Wo warst du, Adam? have the theme of the horror of war, its destructive forces, and the helplessness of the simple soldier enmeshed in it. Kalow goes as far as to suggest that Böll may owe the fact that he "found words" to the soldier Böll, or that it was the event of war that at least caused Böll's power of expression to surface more quickly.[22] In any case war left its mark upon the author and Böll has shown that he found language in which to express it better than most of the other "Heimkehrer", except perhaps Wolfgang Borchert. The inevitable death of Andreas, the protagonist of Der Zug war pünktlich and the accidental death of Feinhals in Wo warst du, Adam? are not only

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[21]Therese Poser, op. cit., p.249.

[22]Gert Kalow, op. cit., p.429.

phenomena of evil and senselessness but point the way to what might almost be described as the spiritual death of the alienated characters he describes in the later novels. In Und sagte kein einziges Wort there is the helplessness of the returning soldier, his apathy, disorientation, fatigue, boredom and utter inability to adapt, to function and become part of society again. In Billiard um halb zehn there is a conscious retreat from the system, an unwillingness to participate in the present as a form of protest that the past must be remembered and cannot be forgotten when the present is in essence so reminiscent of it.

Already from these brief sketches of the basic characteristics of Böll's novels it seems that the author is doing more than merely using the aesthetic tools of his trade to tell a story for the sole purpose of entertainment. There is a strong identity between author and character, so that Böll "tends to dwell in the minds of his characters, to convey his own view in their reflections and utterances."[23] This opinion is shared by Kalow who sees Böll's heroes as "Demonstrationsobjekte", and the true unexpressed heroes of Böll's novels as "moralische Ideen."[24] This remark, though over-stated, is to some extent true.

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[23]W. E. Yuill, op. cit., p.149.

[24]Gert Kalow, op. cit., p.435.

Böll's own work - which to Ziolkowski constitutes an "oeuvre"[25] - bears best witness to the fact that Böll sees more in art than isolated aestheticism. Time and again the negative figure of the aesthete appears in his novels: the inhuman musician Filskeit in Wo warst du, Adam?, the critic Schurbigel in Haus ohne Hüter, the Dante-reading bishop in Und sagte kein einziges Wort, the monks who protect the monastery Sankt Anton as a cultural monument in Billiard um halb zehn and Sommerwild and his circle in Ansichten eines Clowns, to name only a few. It is in the name of the morally committed artist that Böll attacks the hollow pretenders represented in these figures.

Böll defines the committed artist as one who recognises an obligation to something besides his art and whose duty it is to incorporate both responsibilities within his creation. An artist, according to Böll, should by his very nature be capable of being above his art.[26] This commitment of the artist to an ethical value outside his art, he states, can be to himself as Christian, socialist, be it only as "vager Liberaler"[27], but whatever form it takes, it has its roots in social responsibility.

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[25] Theodore Ziolkowski, op. cit., p.17.

[26] Heinrich Böll, "Über den Roman," in Aufsätze, p.121.

[27] Ibid.

As stated, in Böll's own case this responsibility is to himself as a Christian. It is confirmed in the sentence: "Ich glaube an Christus."[28] So he is an artist and a Christian, which poses a dilemma for him that he finds difficult to resolve: "Solange das Geheimnis der Kunst nicht entziffert ist, bleibt dem Christen nur ein Instrument: sein Gewissen; aber er hat ein Gewissen als Christ und eins als Künstler, und diese beiden Gewissen sind nicht immer in Übereinstimmung."[29]

The question then arises as to how Böll - as a confessed Christian writer - can so blatantly attack Catholicism. For the Catholic Böll has been accused of an anti-religious stance in many of his works, the novel Ansichten eines Clowns probably provoking the most indignation. In the words of Kurz: "Nicht als unfreiwillig Getaufter, nicht als gefestigter Atheist, sondern als katholischer Christ kritisiert Böll seit den mittleren fünfziger Jahren unablässig die Katholiken, ihren Ismus, ihr Christentum."[30] Böll's trenchant and often angry condemnation of Catholic practices exposes him to misinterpretation. More perspicacious critics realize, however, that it is not faith which is under attack but petrified dogma. Grothmann, for instance, begins his analysis of religious aspects of some of

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[28]Heinrich Böll, "Eine Welt ohne Christus," in Was halten Sie vom Christentum?, München, 1957, p.23.

[29]Heinrich Böll, "Kunst und Religion," in Aufsätze, München, 1957, p.51.

[30]P. K. Kurz, "Heinrich Böll: Die Denunziation des Krieges und der Katholiken," in SZ, (1971), p.27.

Böll's work by drawing a sharp distinction between religion and church.[31] So does Böll too in his conversation with H. L. Arnold when he says: "Kirche und Religion müssen wir völlig trennen, das sei vorausgesetzt."[32] Critics such as Klieneberger see a "Kierkegaardian edge"[33] to such critique. Böll is attempting to expose the scandal of the Catholic church of the Federal Republic which he sees as betraying its original principles both during the Third Reich and in post-war and present-day Germany.

The basic traditional Christianity which Böll advocates stems from a sensitive concern for the human being in society. It is the human situation that worries Böll, the struggle of frail humanity in the face of social, political and ecclesiastical power. This is seen by Bernhard as "der Gegensatz von Botschaft des Evangeliums und der konkreten Situation, in der es erlebt werden soll"[34], forming the polarity which is the source of the critical element in Böll's work.

Bernhard's term "konkrete Situation" may be rephrased as environment. Böll exposes his sympathetic characters to a

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[31] W. H. Grothmann, "Die Rolle der Religion im Menschenbild Heinrich Bölls," in GQ, XLIV (1971), p.191.

[32] Heinrich Böll and H. L. Arnold, op. cit., p.21.

[33] H. R. Klieneberger, "Heinrich Böll in Ansichten eines Clowns," in GL&L, XIX (1965/66), p.36.

[34] H. J. Bernhard, Die Romane Heinrich Bölls, Berlin, 1970, p.94.

setting where they have difficulty in finding a place. For his man of conscience it is virtually a world so in conflict with his own identity that he cannot adapt and instead lives on the brink of society or completely outside of it. To seek comfort from the church is futile, for the church has become part of this milieu and many of her agents reduced to "milieu-Catholics", bowing to the demands of society, of the majority. Where the standards of milieu contradict moral and religious values, the "milieu-Catholics" show no evidence of undergoing any inner spiritual conflict. They simply seem to conform.

The term "Milieukatholizismus" was coined by Amery[35] in his book criticising the Catholic church of the twentieth century. He defines "milieu-Catholicism" as an inhumanity which can go hand in hand with the most sincere piety, with the most subtle theological insight. He speaks of the obstinate way in which human experience and human values are set aside in order to preserve the status quo. This status quo, he continues, is not a requirement of religious faith but is created by man in accordance with his milieu. Amery bitterly criticises the subservience of Catholicism to milieu when he states that this milieu has taken possession of German Catholicism to an extent that no sovereign ever managed: "Sagen wir es schon hier: diese Herrschaft muss gebrochen werden."[36]

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[35]Carl Amery, Die Kapitulation oder deutscher Katholizismus heute, Hamburg, 1963, p.16.

[36]Ibid., p.10.

It is interesting to note that the epilogue to Amery's book was written by Böll. He describes Amery's assessment of the situation of German Catholicism as fair, although it confronts a body to whom fairness is not too familiar a word.[37] Böll stresses the salient points of Amery's analysis, particularly the role German Catholicism did and did not play in the thirties and forties. He questions the ethics of the Catholic church of the Federal Republic, emphasizing the fact that once again Catholicism is capitulating to political authority: "Der deutsche Katholizismus ist auf eine heillose Weise mit jener Partei und ihren Interessen verstrickt, die sich als einzige das C (für christlich) angesteckt hat."[38] Any resistance to milieu in the days of Nazi-Germany had been "Privatsache"[39] on the part of the individual Catholic. Böll closes by reiterating Amery's question: whether resistance to the unholy opportunism of a party will again remain a private matter, or whether German Catholicism can withdraw from its ambiguous position, cure itself of its schizophrenia and assume its true Christian role in society. This is the objective of the author in his often bitter attack on the church in much of his writing, especially in the novels.

In this thesis characters representative of "milieu-

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[37]Ibid., p.124.

[38]Ibid., p.126.

[39]Ibid.

Catholicism" will be juxtaposed with those demonstrating an innate goodness of character - an ideal picture of mankind based on the Christian message of humanity. The novels selected for the purpose of this dissertation - Wo warst du, Adam? (1951), Und sagte kein einziges Wort (1953), Haus ohne Hüter (1954), Billiard um halb zehn (1959), Ansichten eines Clowns (1963), and Gruppenbild mit Dame (1971) - are representative of Böll's early, middle and later stages of writing over a twenty-year period. One can, therefore, trace the development of Böll's theme of morality in an individual with changing circumstances, and in society itself which is superficially in a constant state of flux.

An examination of the attitude of society - in particular in the Catholic element - throughout the years will show whether Böll senses any basic change. Furthermore, a study of the character of Böll's individual will determine the nature of the values Böll prizes in his vision of mankind. It is hoped by these means to discover the criterion for Böll's morality, this morality which is so important throughout his work and which he would like to see in place of the present social standards he deplores.

CHAPTER I

CATHOLIC CHARACTERS GOVERNED BY MILIEU

Abstract intellectual theorising by theologians; a cult of aestheticism within the church; important deeds performed by leading Catholics for personal motives; the church's compromise with conventional social standards and open affinity with certain political parties: these are some of the evils Böll seeks to expose in his novels.

Böll has not forgotten that the Vatican was the first state to take up diplomatic relations with Hitler.[1] In comparing the behaviour of the institution of the Catholic church during the Nazi era with its present attitude, Böll suspects that the church might again be capitulating to political and social standards of morality in being too closely associated with so-called "Christian" political parties. He describes the near-congruity of CDU and church as disastrous[2], its possible outcome being the extinction of theology altogether. Böll fears that the church, in functioning politically instead of spiritually, is losing its true identity, its clergy largely interested in self-gratification, prestige and power.

Böll criticises the Catholic who allows his ethical attitude to be conditioned by social and political standards

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[1]Heinrich Böll, Brief an einen jungen Katholiken, Köln-Berlin, 1961, p.19. This work will be cited hereafter as Brief.

[2]Ibid., p.21.

instead of heeding the spiritual morality of the Catholic faith. He caricatures such Catholics - the "milieu-Catholics" referred to in the Introduction - throughout his novels. It will be examined what characteristics Böll condemns in his representation of the "milieu-Catholic" and also what fundamental Christian values expected to be found in a Catholic are glaringly absent from his portrayal.

In the early novel Wo warst du, Adam? the all-enveloping theme is war, and Catholicism plays only a subsidiary role. The Catholic characters are shown almost entirely in a positive light, such as in the Catholic protagonist Feinhals and in Ilona, the Jewess converted to Catholicism who demonstrates a devout piety which she transmits to Feinhals himself. However, Böll has portrayed in this novel an extreme case of a Catholic governed by milieu in the figure of the concentration camp commandant Filskeit. In Filskeit Böll has created a beast, representative of the many Nazi war criminals totally committed to their ideology, in the name of which they carried out sadistic atrocities. Filskeit is a Catholic in name only, his only interest in church having ever been in its musical aspect - in the choir. His fanaticism and passion for choirs manifested itself earlier in Filskeit's life when, as a young man, he was conductor of a Catholic church choir, though he disliked the liturgy and hated even more the smile on the face of the priest:

a smile representing love for mankind.[3] During the war he retains his pathological passion for choirs and integrates this with his racial ideology in a most monstrous way. He does this by forcing each new Jewish inmate of his camp to submit to a singing audition which will decide whether they become members of Filskeit's exclusive choir - or whether they die. Schwarz mistakenly maintains that since Filskeit himself is incapable of killing by his own hand, he cannot be accused of being a monster.[4] This, however, in no way diminishes the monstrosity of the commander who gives the death order. Indeed the perverse and inhuman test for survival he forces each inmate to undergo is in itself a monstrous act, and Filskeit's obedience to Nazi authority demonstrates his subjection to the standards of society in the Third Reich which he completely accepted.

Filskeit does not enjoy music in any sensual or spiritual way. He is not entertained by it, but derives satisfaction from an aesthetic, intellectual understanding and an ambition to achieve perfection. In the figure of Filskeit can be seen elements of the Catholic aesthete caricatured in later novels of Böll, including his next novel Und sagte kein einziges Wort, as will be further discussed.

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[3]Heinrich Böll, Wo warst du, Adam?, Frankfurt-Berlin, 1969, p.104. This work will be cited hereafter as Wo warst.

[4]W. J. Schwarz, op. cit., p.60.

Und sagte kein einziges Wort concerns the fate of Fred Bogner, who, already oppressed by the war, fails to adjust to the further economic and social oppressions of post-war life to which he and his wife and family are subjected. There is here direct attack on routine Catholicism in the immediate post-war years. This is most vividly portrayed in the character of Frau Franke, who is an active member of the Catholic church. She serves on numerous committees and boards and enjoys the reputation of a woman working with selfless dedication for superficial Catholic causes. Every day she receives holy communion and is allowed to kiss the bishop's ring when he receives the leading Catholics of his diocese. Frau Franke is the prototype of the conscientious Catholic who punctiliously fulfills the church duties required of her. However, as Burns states: "she lacks the one thing that would transform her from an opportunistic member of the church community into a real Christian: humanity."[5] She lives according to the letter of her faith but is very far removed from its spirit, as she demonstrates in her negative attitude towards her neighbours, the Bogners. Frau Franke uses her influence with the church authorities to deny the Bogners a decent apartment. Because of this they must continue to live in the confines of one room within Frau Franke's lavish apartment. She also places her own "need" for a consulting room above the Bogners' obvious desperate need for an extra room.

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[5]Robert A. Burns, The Theme of Non-Conformism in the Work of Heinrich Böll, Warwick, 1973, p.25.

Unlike her husband, Frau Franke has no kind feelings towards children, and even seeming acts of kindness such as her Christmas invitation to the Bogners have the ulterior motive of making her appear a good person and humiliating her guests, as Frau Franke's luxury only serves to emphasise their own poverty and wretched circumstances. Stemming from a business family, Frau Franke shows great respect for personal possessions - objects of art and money. Käte Bogner sees her as commercialising on her very religion: " ... ich meine ..., dass sie mit dem Kostbarsten Handel treibt: mit Gott."[6] Frau Franke's voice is described as soft, only becoming shrill in her arguments with the Bogners. Significantly her voice takes on a very gentle tone for the word "Geld". Her gentle musical tone can be heard counting jars of preserves in the cellar, "singend die Zahlen wie die Kadenzen einer geheimen Liturgie, und ihre Stimme erinnert mich an die Stimme einer betenden Nonne .... "[7] Hers is an adoration of things rather than a love of people.

In his description of Frau Franke we find one of Böll's most scathing criticisms of German "milieu-Catholicism" where the Christian message is lost and camouflaged by a pious veneer of religious respectability and a hard self-centredness and cruelty or indifference to one's fellow-man.

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[6]Heinrich Böll, Und sagte kein einziges Wort, West-Berlin, 1959, p.22. This work will be cited hereafter as Und sagte.

[7]Ibid.

There is in this same novel an attack on the high clerics of the Catholic church, Böll's description of the bishop being a case in point. The figure of the bishop represents an example of the Catholic aesthete, the interest being in literature. Well-groomed and cultured, the bishop moves in a diocese where there exist pressing social and economic needs. He is a man very well acquainted with Frau Franke and who has therefore opportunity to witness the Bogners' living conditions. The very fact that the bishop can ignore this is a meaningful reflection on his character. He is representative of what Burns terms "an aestheticisation of religion"[8] which places greater emphasis on the purely formalistic performance of ritual than on the realization of the Christian ideals. The bishop has access to the luxury villa of a wealthy foreigner where even the dog has a room of its own bigger than that of the Bogners. While this house is vacant - nine months annually - the bishop has use of it. He visits often, the manservant having been instructed to see to his every comfort, and the bishop spends his leisure reading Dante, certainly a far more aesthetic study than any contemplation of the hell members of his own diocese might be experiencing.

This same bishop shows concern for his popular image by assuming the local dialect from the pulpit, his boring sermons full of platitudes, clichés and half-truths. In the words of

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[8] Robert A. Burns, op. cit., p.25.

Fred Bogner: "Die Wahrheit ist nicht langweilig, nur hat der Bischof offenbar die Gabe, sie langweilig erscheinen zu lassen."[9] Böll's most telling criticism of him is the adjective "dumm" as, for Böll, stupidity is linked with lack of humane feeling.

Böll satirizes the bishop's rigid adherence to ritual and preoccupation with the image he projects as he heads the Catholic procession: "Der Bischof war sehr gross und schlank ... dichtes weisses Haar ... die Hände gefaltet ... das goldene Kreuz auf seiner Brust ... hatte einen fürstlichen Schritt ..., und es sah wie eine sanfte Veränderung des Stechschrittes aus ... war Offizier ... Asketengesicht war photogen. Es eignete sich gut als Titelblatt für religiöse Illustrierte."[10] This commercialisation of religion is taken a step further in the obvious parallel Böll makes between the Catholic parade and the druggists' convention taking place at almost the same time, such slogans as "Vertrau dich deinem Drogisten an" being hoisted on the same banners from which the church appeals had just been removed. Böll's implication is, of course, as Wirth[11] states, that the church has become a secular institution, capable of being replaced by any other organisation.

The Catholic church's love of ritual is satirized even

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[9]Heinrich Böll, Und sagte, p.61.

[10]Ibid., p.47.

[11]Günter Wirth, Heinrich Böll, Köln, 1969, p.74.

more in Böll's portrayal of the remainder of the procession, comprised of pretentious groups of monks, academics, students and elegant businessmen, all immaculate in their outer appearance, looking studiously intelligent, serious, pious and "lächerlich."[12] Symbolically too the sacred Host - the very essence of Catholicism - could hardly be seen in the procession, hidden as it was by the members of the parade. In this way Böll symbolises the true message of the Gospel being thrust into the background and almost blotted out by religious hypocrites. The religious hypocrite is further attacked in Böll's next novel.

Again in Haus ohne Hüter Böll's theme is the post-war struggle for existence. The novel deals with the broken lives of two war-widows and the manner in which the destructive force of war and the loss of their respective husbands affects not only the women but also the children. In this novel too Catholicism is seen to play a negative role.

Böll attacks the Catholic aesthete in this novel in the figure of the critic Schurbigel. This man who in 1934 conformed with Nazism to his own profit, writing his Ph.D. on the subject: "Unser Führer in der modernen Lyrik"[13], immediately after the war saw his own advantage in adapting to post-war

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[12] Heinrich Böll, Und sagte, p.49

[13] Heinrich Böll, Haus ohne Hüter, West-Berlin, 1968, p.21. This work will be cited hereafter as Haus.

religion.[14] During the war he had urged everyone to join the party in order to "christianize" it: "mit christlichem Gedankengut den Nationalsozialismus durchdringen."[15] Following the war Schurbigel began "discovering" Christian artists. Fortunately, he already had to his credit the discovery of the poet Raimund Bach during the war years and Bach is said to have despised Schurbigel in the same way he also despised Pater Willibrord, a disciple of the critic.[16] In Schurbigel Böll portrays the Catholic intellectual who sees profit in the relationship of religion and art and knows how to use this to his own advantage. In the same way as he was the agent of Nazism in the past, he now makes propaganda for clerical Catholic culture politics.

Schurbigel's embarrassment by his past activities finds expression in his attack on heretics incapable of comprehending the conversion of a spiritually mature man[17] - with which he finds it necessary to begin each of his literary talks to Catholic audiences. Böll compares Schurbigel - in his mannerisms during these lectures - with a barber anxious to serve his customers with hot compresses and mysterious fragrant essences,

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[14] Ibid., p.23.

[15] Ibid., p.73.

[16] Ibid., p.70.

[17] Ibid.

all the while radiating goodwill. Here again religion is being reduced to the level of cheap commercialism. His talks are described as intelligent and his voice pleasant; he is also cunning enough to use the trick of praising the work of his opponents while finding fault with that of his friends. Thus he enjoys the reputation of being incorruptible. He also thrives on applause - not spontaneous noisy clapping - but decent, discreet, lengthy appreciation, this being more in keeping with the distinguished image he seeks to project.

Schurbigel stands with Pater Willibrord at the centre of a Catholic circle interested in the modern lyric. Another prominent member of this elite cultural circle is Gäseler, once the officer who sent the same Raimund Bach, now so fervently worshipped by him, to certain death on the Russian front - out of personal malice. Böll depicts the Catholic Gäseler in the post-war years as successful, well-mannered, well-groomed, cultured and a careerist. He has long ago been able not only to come to terms with his past - but has in fact forgotten it. Bach had summed him up as follows: "Abitur gut. Katholisch. Will Jura studieren, korrespondiert mit rechtstehenden München. Krankhaft ehrgeizig."[18] Gäseler is elsewhere described as: " ... ein Schwein ... irgend so ein katholisches Rindvieh, das mit der Kultur zu tun hat"[19], underlining Böll's attack on the

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[18] Ibid., p.159.

[19] Ibid., p.157.

Catholic aesthete.

There is also in this novel direct attack on the attitude of the church during the Third Reich. The priest who seeks to console Nella on her husband's death is the same man who condoned the war and its cause, who so passionately prayed for the Fatherland and victory. Nella sees him as a hypocrite, representative of the clergy's conformity to milieu: " ... rolle weiterhin dein R in Vaterland und Führer - schwinge das L in Volk - und lausche dem nichtigen Echo, das dein falsches Pathos aus der Taufkapelle zurückwirft - ...."[20] This morality reflects the standards of society rather than the conscience of a priest.

The question of morality is a central issue of this novel, as it is of consuming interest to Böll. In Haus ohne Hüter much is made of the ecclesiastical sin of breaking the sixth commandment and numerous references are made to Frau Brielach, one of the war-widows, being "unmoralisch"[21] in the eyes of society on account of her successive romantic relationships. Böll makes it clear, however, that to him the morality of a human being involves far more than keeping the ten commandments. It is not simply a question of decency, but involves the question of human conscience. He points an accusing finger at the

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[20] Ibid., p.128.

[21] Ibid., p.9.

morality of the Schurbigel-Pater Willibrord-Gäseler circle and at the bourgeois society that considers the Nazis "nicht so schlimm"[22] and would like to bury the past. This milieu-morality of the church is criticised in the same vein in Böll's Brief an einen jungen Katholiken. He deplores the fact that Catholic priests considered it their main task as army chaplains to alert soldiers to sexual hazards with no reference to any other kind of moral danger such as the service of Hitler's Nazi ideology. The priests made no mention of any conflict the soldier might experience between orders and conscience.[23] National Socialism, the real threat to their morality, was something the church not only condoned but even sanctioned.

Perhaps Böll's attack on institutionalized Christianity is most clearly demonstrated in his next novel: Billiard um halb zehn. The abbey Sankt Anton stands in a focal point of the story, as it was built in 1907 by Heinrich Fähmel as his first architectural project, destroyed in 1945 by his son Robert as an act of protest against its monks, who compromised with the fascist regime, and finally the third generation, in Robert's son, Joseph, participates in its rebuilding.

For Robert, who is a Catholic and whose ethical attitude has a Christian basis, the abbey cannot be regarded as a church

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[22]Ibid., p.196.

[23]Heinrich Böll, Brief, p.9.

when its spiritual meaning has been betrayed in the actions of its monks. For him it is simply a work of art which was protected during the war whereas human lives were sacrificed. Böll represents the abbey as a symbol of Catholic aestheticism, where the clergy seek to keep intact their cultural monuments and abandon living human beings to the powers of destruction. The church, as Martini[24] also points out, leaves the Catholic in isolation. Robert's act of blowing up the abbey is a protest against all this.

As far as Böll's opinion on churches as beautiful works of art is concerned, one has only to read in Irisches Tagebuch his comparison of St. Patrick's cathedral in Dublin with another unnamed church in the same city to realize that to Böll even a beautiful church has no meaning if it is not used. He describes St. Patrick's cathedral as " ... so sauber ... so menschenleer und so voll patriotischer Marmorfiguren"[25] - and the other church as " ... voller Menschen, voller Kitsch"[26], but its relevance is in the fact that it is in use.[27] In Billiard um halb zehn the abbey was misused - in fact abused - as a church, and this is what Böll, through Robert Fähmel, condemns.

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[24]Fritz Martini, "Heinrich Böll: Billiard um halb zehn," in MSpr, LV (1961), p.28.

[25]Heinrich Böll, Irisches Tagebuch; München, 1964, p.21. This work will be cited hereafter as Tagebuch.

[26]Ibid., p.25

[27]Ibid., p.26.

The monks of the abbey in their capitulation to milieu (in compromising with the fascists) are described in the novel as having partaken of the "sacrament of the beast" ("Sakrament des Büffels."[28]). This is part of Böll's over-elaborate use of symbolism pervading the whole novel, and used to contrast with other characters who partake of the "sacrament of the lamb", to be discussed in the next chapter. For Böll the "Büffel" represent all that is evil in his eyes: Nazism, militarism, materialism - and is epitomized in the military figure of Hindenburg. Böll's use of the word "sacrament" in connection with the "beast" demonstrates the connection he sees between the Catholic church and social standards of evil. In addition, the word "sacrament" suggests the involvement of the soul, and its use here can be interpreted as demonstrating the degree to which its participants are enthralled - taken over mind, body and soul. Exaggerated usage of this symbol throughout the novel has a clumsy, laboured effect.

Heinrich Fähmel bitterly recalls how his own son Otto tasted of this sacrament of the beast and became a Nazi: (Otto) "der ein so lieber Junge war, und brav, und weil er so lieb war und so brav, so folgsam - mir so fremd wurde, wie kein Mensch auf dieser Erde."[29] Johanna, Heinrich's wife, expresses

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[28]Heinrich Böll, Billiard um halb zehn, München, 1968, p.39. This work will be cited hereafter as Billiard.

[29]Ibid., p.80.

the fearful metamorphosis of her own son Otto as follows: "... ich begriff, was es heisst, wenn sie sagen, dass von einem Menschen nur noch die Hülle übrigbleibt; Otto war nur noch Ottos Hülle, die rasch einen anderen Inhalt bekam; er hatte vom Sakrament des Büffels nicht nur gekostet, er war damit geimpft worden ... Mord war in seinem Blick ...."[30] His brother Robert returns home after two years to find only this shell of Otto, who would, he feels, if necessary have delivered his own mother to the hangman: " ... hinter dieser breiten, blassen Stirn war die Macht in ihrer einfachsten Formel wirksam, war Macht über furchtsame Schulkameraden, über Passanten, die die Fahne nicht grüssten ...."[31] During the uneasy days of the Third Reich it became unbearable for the Fähmels to live with this dangerous stranger in their midst, his oppressive presence forbidding even small-talk. His very movements are described as militaristic and menacing: "seine marschierenden Beine ... Feindschaft, Feindschaft schlug der Takt ...."[32] Care had to be taken that Otto would not discover the notes from Robert who had fled for his life into exile. In this way Böll has merely sketched a picture of Otto as representative of the many rampant Nazis. Otto's actual words are given on only two occasions. He repeatedly and mockingly taunts the family:

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[30] Ibid., p.109/110.

[31] Ibid., p.116.

[32] Ibid., p.31.

"Ihr könnt mich ja rauswerfen"[33]. The other occasion is when he greets his brother Robert's forced attempt at reconciliation with a justified: "Was soll's."[34] For Otto is beyond hope, lost to the forces of evil.

In company with Otto are two other members of "milieu-Catholicism" who partake of the "Sakrament des Büffels" - Wakiera, the sports teacher, and Nettlinger, a class-mate of Robert and his friend Schrella. Both Wakiera and Nettlinger take sadistic pleasure in persecuting and tormenting those who will not join - those who, although weak, frightened and helpless in the power of milieu, will not betray their intrinsic love of humanity by conforming and becoming part of terror. An example of this behaviour is in a description of a football game which both Wakiera, as referee, and Nettlinger as team-mate of Robert and Schrella, run the risk of losing for the sheer pleasure of torturing Schrella, a member of their own team. Robert confides to Hugo how anxious to win Nettlinger had professed to be before the game, and yet during the match he risked the defeat of his team by working with the opposing side for the sheer sadistic delight of seeing Schrella get hurt by the ball.[35] Yet another example of their brutality is when Nettlinger and Wakiera, calling themselves "Hilfspolizei",

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[33]Ibid., p.132.

[34]Ibid., p.117.

[35]Ibid., p.35.

hunt down what they term "Bettler" and beat them mercilessly with a barb-wire whip until their backs are covered with wounds.[36]

As far as the Nettlinger of the Federal Republic is concerned - as opposed to the Nettlinger of Nazi Germany - it would appear that he is a different person: "Ich bin Demokrat, ich bin es aus Überzeugung."[37] He oozes respectability, importance and charm: " ... gross, grauhaarig, mit leicht gerötetem Gesicht, roch nach exquisiten Spesenmahlzeiten, trug einen Anzug, der nach Qualität geradezu stank; Macht, Würde und herrischen Charme ..., die ihn unwiderstehlich machte."[38] He is, however, in fact the same character and has undergone no change of heart, as is illustrated in the interesting parallel Böll draws between his behaviour to Schrella in the past and now. The "democrat" Nettlinger is still in a position of power; whereas in the past he had the power to imprison Schrella, he now has the power to release him when he is mistakenly put in prison on his return from exile. Schrella sees the roles as the same, only the ideologies are different. Both Nettlinger's acts towards Schrella - imprisonment and release - were prompted by the same motive, as Schrella sees it, to render Schrella harmless by keeping him out of Nettlinger's way.[39]

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[36] Ibid., p.40.

[37] Ibid., p.158.

[38] Ibid., p.11.

[39] Ibid., p.150.

To all appearances Nettlinger is a "decent" person. Even in the past he had shown acts of decency, such as allowing Robert to run away and consistently crossing off Robert's wife Edith's name from Wakiera's black list. Böll is trying to expose the evil concealed in generally accepted virtues of decency and respectability: "Eure Wohltaten ... sind fast schrecklicher als eure Missetaten."[40]

The above words might well have been spoken by the clown Hans Schnier in Ansichten eines Clowns and directed at the Catholic intellectuals who used Catholic doctrine as an instrument in breaking up his common-law marriage. For it is an example of how, in Böll's view, the "milieu-Catholics" can destroy human life in the name of an ideology. The novel Ansichten eines Clowns is probably Böll's most disputed work. It is dismissed by some as little more than a lengthy and not very credible polemic against routine Catholicism and aestheticism with Böll playing the part of the "enfant terrible" of German Catholicism.[41] Kurz, however, shows a deeper understanding in his interpretation: "Wahre Religion wird nirgends angegriffen; nur ihre Zerrformen, die Bündnisse ihrer Vertreter mit dem ungeläuterten Ich und den opportunistischen Ansichten der Welt, verfallen dem zornigen Gericht."[42] In a later criticism Kurz

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[40] Ibid.

[41] W. J. Schwarz, op. cit., p.74.

[42] P. K. Kurz, "Ansichten eines Clowns," in SZ, (1962/63), p.226.

notes with what indignation the publication of this novel was greeted in the Catholic world: "Sie pochten auf ihre Moral. Keine Gewissenserforschung, sondern Verhärtung ...." [43] It is ironical that such reaction only serves to emphasize the validity of the clown's criticism, and, as depicted by Böll, the clown plays the part in society very similar to that of the author himself, and - as Härtling sees it - to the part of the court jester.[44]

What he sees above all is the Catholic milieu of Köln and Bonn. This first-person narrative embraces the clown's memory of his war-time childhood, his adolescence spent largely in a Catholic boarding school and the meaningful five years he lived with Marie Derkum. Hans' abandonment by Marie has reduced him to seek comfort in alcohol and caused his professional, physical and spiritual collapse. Therefore, his main attack is upon those people who wreaked such havoc on his life: Sommerwild, Kinkel, Züpfner and others of the Catholic intellectual circle already mentioned who used dogma in place of "caritas" in their treatment of Hans and Marie. These are "the self-appointed guardians and representatives of religion" who, according to Klieneberger, "miss the spirit of the Gospel message by insisting on the letter of the law."[45] For, accord-

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[43] P. K. Kurz, "Die Denunziation des Krieges und der Katholiken," in SZ, (1971), p.30.

[44] P. Härtling, "Ein Clown greift an: zu Heinrich Bölls neuem Roman," in Monat, XV (1963), p.75.

[45] H. R. Kleineberger, op. cit., p.36.

ing to Catholic dogma, Marie was living with Schnier in a "state of sin" and so endangering her eternal soul. Sommerwild and his circle caused her to experience such "metaphysischen Schrecken"[46] that she fled in terror not only back to the Catholic church but also literally into the arms of Züpfner, a member of the circle romantically interested in Marie. This fact even casts doubt on the purity of the Catholics' motives, as the personal element plays too large a role.

Böll portrays the members of Marie's Bonn circle as engaging in dubious political and business manoeuvres but priding themselves on their intellectual sophistication, their impeccable good taste in liturgical matters and church art: "Sie würden nie riskieren, kitschig oder sentimental zu sein, sie würden sich nie eine Blösse geben, jedenfalls eher in puncto Moral als in puncto Geschmack."[47] Their leader is Prälat Sommerwild: " ... gross ... schlank ... weisshaarig und 'gütig'".[48] He represents the Catholic aesthete in this novel, interested in collecting valuable, antique pieces of church art. Böll criticises the cult of aestheticism within the church as being out of proportion with religious activity. The clown imagines that Züpfner will probably pay Sommerwild commission of some art piece or other for so successfully winning over Marie for

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[46] Heinrich Böll, Ansichten eines Clowns, München, 1969, p.78. This work will be cited hereafter as Ansichten.

[47] Ibid., p.19.

[48] Ibid., p.108.

him. Sommerwild is portrayed as emphasising his "upper-class" status and connections. He is criticised as stressing form rather than content in his sermons. These are more like modish literary lectures, and described by Schnier as Rilke, Hofmannsthal and Newman mixed into "eine Art Honigwasser."[49]

Sommerwild and his followers call meetings where programs are followed, discussions take place, theories put forward, but what is lacking is a sense of concrete reality. They lecture on and discuss religion rather than practise it. Böll characterises West German Catholicism as having lost its true nature in the over-emphasis on the cult of the ratio, of reason. Their strength is in theological theory, but not in direct down-to-earth contact with mankind. At their meetings pseudo-intellectualism and pretentious cultural inanities overshadow any purposive discussion. Catholics such as Kinkel are exposed as self-seeking and remote from the problems they discuss - such as poverty in society.[50] On a superficial level Sommerwild, like other Böll characters found wanting in justice and charity, is an attractive person showing certain "decent" traits such as his honest admiration for Schnier's purity of soul. Similarly Züpfner, who is a wealthy businessman and key figure in the "Dachverband katholischer Laien", regards himself and is

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[49] Ibid., p.111.

[50] Ibid., p.18.

regarded by others as the model of a Christian gentleman: "Er ist der Typ, der sich, bevor er zum Papst ins Audienzzimmer geführt wird, noch rasch mit dem Taschentuch über die Schuhe fahren würde."[51]

Like Züpfner, Sommerwild is smug and hypocritical, his main interest being with the image he projects to the public at large - the milieu: "War ich gut? Fanden Sie mich gut?"[52] Schnier regards this question of Sommerwild following a television appearance as a violation of his clerical office. In his caricature of Catholic clergy Böll (through Schnier) is attacking the Catholics' claim to the natural possession of "unerschütterlichen Wahrheiten"[53], their condescension, conceit and eloquence. They see only sin in human nature and believe that their Catholicism makes them exempt from being human. Rules, dogma, law and order take the place of mercy and compassion. For instance, Sommerwild's offer of help to Schnier is not concrete; he is merely play-acting, and reacts with embarrassment at Schnier's mention of financial trouble.[54] With regard to money Böll also attacks organised religion in Kostert, secretary of a Christian association, who feels entitled to refuse to pay the clown his full fee after an unsatisfactory

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[51] Ibid., p.136.

[52] Ibid., p.249.

[53] Ibid., p.135.

[54] Ibid., p.133.

performance brought about by Schnier's personal turmoil.[55]

Even Schnier's own brother Leo, who has entered a Catholic seminary for priests, is more concerned with adhering to the letter of the law than its spirit in attaching more importance to obeying house-rules at the seminary than in helping his brother in distress.[56] The clergy is further attacked with reference to the parish priest who admonishes his curate, Heinrich Behlen "die Nächstenliebe nicht zu weit zu treiben"[57], when he learns that the latter is helping Schnier.

As far as the clown's mother is concerned, she is depicted as a heartless, hypocritical snob. During the war she was active and eloquent for the cause of National Socialism, even sacrificing the life of her own daughter Henriette: "Du wirst doch einsehen, dass jeder das Seinige tun muss, die jüdischen Yankees von unserer heiligen deutschen Erde wieder zu vertreiben."[58] In the same way as she then conformed to milieu, she now adjusts to the new mood of reconciliation. Ironically Böll depicts her post-war activity as president of the "Zentralkomitee der Gesellschaften zur Versöhnung rassischer Gegensätze", and the clown notes that she now speaks of German repentance in the

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[55] Ibid., p.13.

[56] Ibid., p.242.

[57] Ibid., p.161.

[58] Ibid., p.24.

same gentle harmless tone that she had previously used to bid farewell to her daughter.[59] His mother was prepared to abandon the boy Schnier for his anti-Nazi behaviour in the war years, just as she now rejects him for the social stigma of having a clown for a son. Surrounded by a coterie of pseudo-artists, she cannot recognise the true talent of the clown; for her values are those of milieu, her criterion for assessing artistic talent conditioned by convention. An example of the charlatan she admires is Schnitzler, who is nothing but a parasite and former defender of the "Führer."[60] Schnitzler now has a comfortable job because he was accidentally banned by the Nazis.

It is this common ability to adapt to any prevailing circumstances and become part of their mood that repels Böll. Former leaders of the Hitler Youth, such as Herbert Kalick, later become managers making speeches for the CDU. Kalick admits to having been a Nazi and an anti-semite but is now a reformed democrat. Schnier, however, remembers the details of the past and observes that the expression in Kalick's eyes has not changed.[61] One of the charges that Schnier levels at Catholics is precisely that they have no sense of detail. To Böll it is in its detail that the secret of terror lies:

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[59] Ibid., p.29.

[60] Ibid., p.34.

[61] Ibid., p.190.

Schnier finds it is a simple matter to feel remorse in a big way, such as for political mistakes, adultery, murder and anti-semitism, but for him forgiveness comes hard with the knowledge of details.[62] The details of war-time Catholic education are still present with Schnier: such as the incident of a teacher approving of the execution of a deserter who refused to defend the "heilige deutsche Erde"[63] and the clown still hears the echo of the teacher's words: " ... mit Stumpf und Stiel ausrotten ..."[64] concerning the boy Schnier's anti-fascist stand.

The negative Catholic criticism with which Ansichten eines Clowns met may well have resulted in the disappointment that caused Böll to say of Catholic power politics: "Meine Radikalität ist gemindert, weil es mich fast nicht mehr interessiert."[65] It therefore follows that in his novel Gruppenbild mit Dame the Catholic motif, so dominant in his former novel, is present only in undertone. He describes the attitude of his sympathetic protagonist Leni Gruyten to the church as: " ... eher eine Vernachlässigung dieses Bereichs."[66] However, as stated by Durzak[67], the Catholic aura surrounding nearly all

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[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid., p.23.

[64] Ibid., p.26.

[65] Heinrich Böll and H. L. Arnold, op. cit., p.22.

[66] Martin Durzak, "Heinrich Bölls epische Summe?" in Basis, III, Frankfurt, 1972, p.194.

[67] Ibid.

Böll's books is fundamentally present here too.

Gruppenbild mit Dame has been described as Böll's most comprehensive work[68], containing themes and features of character already familiar to his readers. Böll himself sees the novel as a continuation of his previous work.[69] Its structure though is innovative: the fictitious narrator in the novel researches and gathers both documented facts and hear-say evidence on a quest after the truth about Leni Gruyten.

The conformity of Catholicism to milieu is mirrored in Böll's satirical portrayal of the conformity of the witness-figures of the three nuns, Leni's teachers. All three had in common certain physical traits and forms of behaviour. In particular all three had - to varying degrees within the same range - similar experience with Leni: difficulty in extracting her obvious latent talent with conventional educational methods.[70] There is similar satirization in the figure of yet another of Leni's teachers, this time even more pointedly in the portrayal of her religious instructor, Erich Brings. He is described as an elderly, white-haired, very ascetic person who was so horrified at Leni's enthusiasm to experience the sacrament of communion that he tried to prevent her graduation:

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[68]Dieter Wellershoff, "Ein Tonband-Interview mit Heinrich Böll," in Akzente, XVIII (1971), p.331.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Heinrich Böll, Gruppenbild mit Dame, Köln, 1971, p.31/32. This work will be cited hereafter as Gruppenbild.

"Einer derartig proletarisch-materialistisch geäusserten Begierde nach dem Hochheiligsten musste ich natürlich die Spendung desselben verweigern."[71] A parallel is shown later in Leni's son Lev's eagerness for the sacrament, also resulting in his exclusion and causing him to resort to theft of the consecrated Eucharist.[72] Böll is clearly at odds with the false prudery of clerical observances.

In the case of Leni, we learn that a scandal was avoided simply due to the politically precarious situation of the nuns - already in 1934. Possibly Böll's strongest attack on "milieu-Catholicism" in this novel lies in his description of the behaviour of the nuns of the convent during the pre-war and war era (and here the shadow of the monastery in Billiard um halb zehn is evident). One of the nuns, Sister Rahel, was a converted Jew, and though they did not denounce her to the Nazis, her sister-nuns treated her in keeping with Nazi ideology as an inferior human-being. From being educator on a par with her colleagues, she is reduced to the status of house-maid and generally humiliated until she is finally allowed to starve to death: " ... die war eingesperrt wie ne zum Tode verurteilte Maus ...."[73] The nuns considered their action of hiding and

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[71] Ibid., p.35.

[72] Ibid., p.380.

[73] Ibid., p.99.

feeding a Jew as charitable. They did not question the morality of the prevailing ideology of milieu, which should have caused them considerable spiritual conflict, but compromised with it in a cruel and inhuman way. All institutional Catholic veneer thus loses meaning for Rahel - even the crucifix.[74] The nuns possessed too little humane feeling even to grant Rahel a Christian burial. They were relieved to be rid of her, as is revealed in the Mother Superior's hard-hearted graveside comment: "Nun kann sie uns wenigstens wegen ihrer verfluchten Raucherkarte keinen Ärger mehr machen."[75] Böll further portrays the Mother Superior as finally defecting completely to the power of milieu by shedding her habit and entering a Nazi women's organisation.[76] Now - decades later - the nuns have forgotten the details, and do not wish to be reminded of Rahel.[77]

In general terms Böll's attitude to the institutionalised church in Gruppenbild mit Dame is not so much depicted by character portrayal of the milieu-Catholic, but is rather demonstrated by the scorn of his positive characters for merciless church dogma, examples of which are interspersed throughout the novel.

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.,p.133.

[76] Ibid., p.40.

[77] Ibid., p.32.

In its ironical and cruel newspaper article with a virulent attack upon Leni as a communist, the CDU exposes itself as rather less Christian than its predominantly Catholic supporters might suppose. In mocking tone doubt is cast upon Leni's code of morals, politics and balance of mind in "diesem christlichen Stile"[78], as Böll terms it.

The character Grundsch, who worked together with Leni making wreaths in a graveyard during the war, has nothing but contempt for the church. He refers to his home as a miserable priest-ridden hole[79], and the women of his family as sour and suffering as a result of listening to no-one but the priests and frequent visits to mass.[80] He suspects that the very people responsible for his mother's death are those getting monuments erected to them: "Und immer noch tun die Pfaffen nichts gegen die Scheissdenkmäler."[81]

Herbert Gruyten, an industrialist and war-profiteer, whose son virtually committed suicide in a senseless protest against the evil of the German cause and his own father's contribution to it, sought to come to terms with his son's death through

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[78] Ibid., p.318.
[79] Ibid., p.201.
[80] Ibid., p.203.
[81] Ibid., p.307.

religion, but in vain. He cannot stand being inside a church longer than two minutes.[82] His wife, on her deathbed, will similarly have nothing to do with it.[83]

The character Lotte Hoyser also voices much scorn for the institution of the church, refusing to have her younger son baptised and accusing the priesthood seminary her husband attended to his mid-teens of having destroyed all his innate and potential goodness.[84] Her sons are removed from their mother Lotte's influence, and are as adults appalled at her anti-clerical stance. They were brought up in the custody of their grandfather Hoyser to be shrewd and prosperous businessmen. They discount the youth they spent with their mother as being on the wrong path and think themselves fortunate to have finally entered into a Christian way of life.[85] Ironically Böll depicts the Hoysers as being happy to leave the "Milieu"[86] of their anti-clerical mother and believe themselves good Christians- a fact which is negated by their very actions. They are the ones responsible for the imprisonment of their own cousin Lev, on a fraud charge, affecting to have done this out of Christian

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[82] Ibid., p.98.

[83] Ibid., p.137.

[84] Ibid., p.81.

[85] Ibid., p.347.

[86] Ibid.

motives - to purge him of his sins of pride and arrogance.

The Hoysers also display racism and snobbism in their disapproval of the foreign manual workers housed with their aunt Leni as a substandard type of tenant. These industrialists consider it inhumane and monstrous of Leni to refuse every manifestation of the profit motive - in collecting but a nominal sum in rent. It is to clear the house of these unfavourable people that the Hoysers are evicting their own aunt and trying to force her into a luxury apartment against her will. They maintain that this must be done in the course of progress, and insist that this is not a case of some brutal and relentless socio-historical process of automation destroying obsolete structures. Böll's caricature is complete in the Hoysers' explanation that they are acting:"bewusst und nicht gewissenlos, jedenfalls nicht, ohne unser Gewissen geprüft zu haben."[87] Böll's implication as to the nature of this conscience is clear. It is the conscience of milieu, of the soulless materialism of the manipulating industrial class with profit as their goal.

As a result of the analysis in this chapter of various characters representative of "milieu-Catholicism", it has been found that what Böll deplores most of all about these figures is their lack of spirituality in being influenced by social, rather than religious, standards of morality.

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[87] Ibid., p.352.

As far as Böll's portrayal of the Catholic clergy is concerned, they have proved hypocritical by being interested in personal image, ecclesiastical dogma and political power. These are superficial and secular interests, missing the spirit of Christianity. Similarly, the Catholic aesthete Böll portrays demonstrates lack of spiritual enjoyment of a work of art in appreciating only the externals, that is the technical aspects, of art - be it music, literature or architecture - without reflection or understanding of what is to Böll its essential part: its spiritual content. The church, for instance, is for Böll a place of worship. He condemns those who appreciate only what he considers its superficial architectural beauty.

It has been found that the basic common trait of all the "milieu-Catholics" analysed is their lack of spirituality in dealing with church affairs, culture and - most important for Böll - in their treatment of other human beings. It has been seen that the "milieu-Catholics" often betray a snobbistic and opportunistic tendency, expecting some personal return or advantage from their "good deeds", primarily in their social image as "respectable" and "responsible" members of the community. Hand in hand with this veneer of "decency", though, they are missing a basic goodness of character as Böll portrays their cruelty and hard-heartedness to others, especially to the poor and oppressed.

The "milieu-Catholics" have been seen to reflect the morality of society; and there is no evidence of Christian values in their behaviour - such as humility, generosity, and human kindness. The morality of the "milieu-Catholic" has been seen to change with a changing society; without a trace of spiritual conflict this character can conform to a fascist society and then later, when it suits his purpose, has no trouble in quickly adjusting to the drastic social change to democracy, as his very conscience is conditioned by society rather than Catholicism.

The modern "milieu-Catholic" depicted has been discovered to be involved in the success and profit ideology of modern society, in inhumane and corrupt business practices. In his attack, then, on the "milieu-Catholic", Böll is criticising contemporary social morality. His criticism of the subjugation of man to the anonymous authority of milieu is provoked by his concern for the human condition in a hostile environment. His ideas on moral reform will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

CHARACTERS PORTRAYING AN ALTERNATIVE INDIVIDUAL MORALITY

Heinrich Böll's critical awareness transcends a mere dissatisfaction with the anonymous authority of milieu. He questions the assumptions upon which society is based, recognising that within a literary context, this can best be done by characters who in some way stand outside society and are not totally enmeshed in it. He therefore depicts a character who cannot or will not conform to the pressure of society's dubious standards and endows this character with virtues which Böll finds so scarce in the contemporary world where even the church is guilty of smugness and hypocrisy.

In Böll's world relief and significance are provided only by isolated manifestations of genuine human emotion, piety, prayer and charity. These virtues are not found in those who are ambitious, interested in success, material prosperity and power; but usually in the lowly, humble and poor - in Böll's outsider who has resisted the pressure of society on him to conform. In his later novels this figure stems from a bourgeois or upper-class family, and he also differs significantly from the poor character of the earlier novels in a shift from passive acceptance to some form of active protest. In the six novels under discussion in this thesis Böll's sympathetic counterpart to the milieu-Catholic is sometimes himself a practising Catholic (as in Und sagte kein einziges Wort), some-

times an atheist (Ansichten eines Clowns), and sometimes largely neglects the realm of Christianity (Gruppenbild mit Dame). What these characters fundamentally have in common, however, is a belief in the inviolability of human life and a respect for humanity.

This chapter sets out to explore Böll's heroes - or "unheroic heroes", as Plant[1] calls them - the individuals who on a moral basis cannot meet the demands made on them by society. By this means it is hoped to discover the nature of the personal alternative standards of morality present in the various protagonists which makes their individual survival possible in the world of Böll.

Even amid the all-pervading cruelty and meaninglessness of life in the war novel Wo warst du, Adam? there is the glimmer of hope which tempers all Böll's negative criticism. This hope in the face of immeasureable odds manifests itself in human communication between strangers. We find a glimpse of this quality in the brief interlude between the peasant girl Szarka and the soldier Schneider through whose eyes she is portrayed: " ... das Mädchen mit seinem hübschen, schmalen Gesicht und dem Lächeln um den Mund."[2] Schneider is drawn to Szarka by her aura of gentleness. The smile-motif is an

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[1] R. Plant, "The World of Heinrich Böll," in GQ, XXXIII (1960), p.127.

[2] Heinrich Böll, Wo warst , p.30.

important feature recurring in much of Böll's work. It provides a personal link between human beings and is almost symbolic with Böll of alleviating the suffering of man lost in a soulless world.

This human contact and understanding changes to a deeper kind of love between man and woman for the soldier Feinhals and the teacher Ilona. It is in his chance meeting with Ilona in the war and in their subsequent mutual love for each other that Feinhals finds meaning to his hitherto senseless existence, a life diseased by the typhoid of war.[3] It is only with Ilona that Feinhals is able to discuss religion and it is through her influence that he is able to pray again "um Gott zu trösten."[4] Until this time he had avoided religion because he associated it with the hypocrisy he witnessed on the part of the institutionalized church: " ... weil die Gesichter und die Predigten der meisten Priester unerträglich seien."[5]

The young Hungarian Jewess Ilona is a convert to Catholicism and she had even entered a convent with the intention of becoming a nun: "Aber der Wunsch zu heiraten und Kinder zu haben war so stark in ihr, dass er auch nach einem Jahr nicht über-

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[3]Antoine de Saint-Exupery, Flug nach Arras, p.67 : "Der Krieg ist eine Krankheit. Wie der Typhus." (Motto to Wo warst du, Adam?)

[4]Heinrich Böll, Wo warst, p.124.

[5]Ibid.

wunden war und sie war in die Welt zurückgekehrt."[6] Ilona then embodies Böll's ideal combination of human nature and strong spiritual faith. She is described as pious, innocent and intelligent.[7] She practises her Christianity in her treatment of other people and also in her habit of prayer. Prayer is a source of comfort to Ilona, and that she draws on this resource in need is evident during her transportation by truck to an extermination camp. The nature of her prayer emphasises her selflessness, for she does not ask for anything, but "sie betete einfach."[8]

The fear of the isolated individual in contemporary society is reflected in Ilona's return to the world on leaving the convent. She returned to the secular world looking for tenderness, but, apart from her transitory encounter with Feinhals, what she found was brutality. Ilona experienced joy from human communication, in her professional contact with children to whom she taught music. In particular she loved singing and that of the children who formed her choir. In the figure of Ilona Böll has epitomized beauty of spirit encased in human form.

The role of human love in relieving man's struggle in life

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[6]Ibid., p.110.

[7]Ibid., p.68.

[8]Ibid., p.109.

is again present in Und sagte kein einziges Wort. Both Sokel[9] and Sonnenfeld[10] concur in the opinion that this novel is more than a social document. Böll in fact presents a Christian problem clothed in social and economic guise. This is also the view held by Coupe[11] who states that it is on Christian grounds that Böll protests against many social developments in post-war Germany.

In Käte Bogner Böll portrays the long-suffering Christ-like figure to whom the title of the novel directly refers. She fights to raise her children and hold together her marriage in the cramped confines of the one room that is her home. She has to contend with poverty; withstand the hard-heartedness of such people as her hypocritical landlady; and, above all, she has to summon the energy to encourage her husband and instil in him some kind of hope to give him the will to live.

Käte shows a profound understanding for Fred, even when he can no longer tolerate their circumstances and takes out his frustrations on the children. She accepts his decision to leave home, and makes herself available to him in third-class hotel rooms, suffering the humiliation of being mistaken for a

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[9] W. H. Sokel, op. cit., p.15.

[10] A. Sonnenfeld, "'They that have not heard shall understand.' A Study of Heinrich Böll," in The Shapeless God, Pittsburgh, 1968, p.189.

[11] W. A. Coupe, "Heinrich Böll's Und sagte kein einziges Wort: An Analysis," in GLL, XXVII (1963/64), p.241.

whore by inquisitive desk-clerks. She also attempts to keep her children happy with special treats such as playing in the hall during the Frankes' infrequent absences, and is dismayed that through long custom of having to remain quiet, they seem to be now no longer capable of making noise. Käte has known the tragedy of losing two small children to disease brought on by post-war filth, the filth she is constantly fighting: " ... den Kampf gegen den Schmutz."[12] She knows that her twins died from lice bites, the remedy for which was a drug manufactured by a factory belonging to a cousin of the Health Minister. Yet she does not have a thought of rebelling against God. Her anger and hatred are directed at the people who live in big houses, unconcerned about the fate of the poor, bombed out of their homes, while she and her family have to eke out a miserable existence as a family of four within one small room. She is especially bitter regarding the paradox of the priests living in wealth and plenty while admonishing their congregation to be humble and modest.

It is, however, to the church that Käte turns to seek spiritual help in her anguish. She confesses her troubles to the very ordinary priest of the parish Church of the Seven Sorrows of Mary. In the figure of this priest Böll depicts an

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[12]Heinrich Böll, Und sagte, p.37.

orthodox practising Catholic who illustrates that, for all the hypocrisy and materialism of many of its members, the church remains a vehicle of divine grace and an active source of Christian teaching and comfort. This priest is representative of the modern poor in spirit: frail, insignificant individuals upon whom the world looks with contempt. The biblical texts of his sermons reflect his simplicity and that of his faith. His purpose in life is to administer to the spiritual needs of the poor people of his parish. He is scorned by the church hierarchy as "typischer Dreiminuspriester"[13], as he has revealed too often that he is a human being with human weaknesses. He has no heroic war-deeds to his credit, but instead had faced disciplinary punishment for some minor military offence. His superiors were even more disturbed, however, by a rumour concerning the priest's platonic relationship with a woman.[14]

It is to this priest that Käte confesses all her pent-up anger and hatred, especially her hate for the rich, smug "milieu-priests". He is human enough to admit to the same feelings of hatred himself, and takes her confession so seriously that he hesitates to absolve her. Besides spiritual comfort, he offers Käte concrete advice: to see to it that Fred returns home.

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[13] Ibid., p.30/31.

[14] Ibid.

The pathetic figure of the priest arouses feelings of compassion and anger in Fred. Fred has left Käte out of feelings of self-hatred due to a loss of self-respect. After living through the poverty and oppression of the past, he finds it hard to adapt himself to the falseness and inhumanity surrounding his post-war situation. He attempts an escape from his present circumstances and so enters into an isolated existence, sleeping at the railway-station, drinking and smoking heavily, and sending what little money he can to his family while squandering the pittance he has left on the slot machines. Unlike his wife, Fred cannot find comfort in the church, even when there is no service in progress.[15]

It is through Fred that Böll reflects anti-clerical views on the bishop in this novel and exposes the hypocrisy of religious ritual in the procession (Chapter I). Even though he sees through religious cant and despises the church as an organisation, Fred has a mystical faith, demonstrating belief in a personal God. He instinctively kneels down and crosses himself before the Eucharist in the procession he finds so disgusting; and for a moment his own action repels him, as he feels it also makes him part of the overall hypocritical scene:

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[15] Ibid., p.26.

" ... bis mir einfiel, dass Gott unschuldig war und dass es keine Heuchelei war, vor ihm niederzuknien."[16]

Fred's indifference and inability to communicate with people is consistent with his sense of alienation from society. The role of tutor, which he assumes just to earn some extra money, together with his work on the switchboard of a religious organisation are not meaningful to him and are performed in an automatic way. His friends become simply money-lenders. Yet he shows human charity in not pressing for money owed to him, desperate though he is for it.[17] He is still able to consider the troubles of his fellow-men.

Fred's melancholy and sensitivity are illustrated by his fondness for cemeteries and funerals. He shows a somewhat morbid preoccupation with death as a release from the futility and suffering of life.[18] It is only when he can see death not as an end to existence but as a gateway to a fuller, richer life that his earthly life takes on new meaning. This happens in the episode with Prälat Serge, a man of genuine charity[19], when Fred finally poses the question that has been haunting him most

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[16]Ibid., p.47.

[17]Ibid., p.11.

[18]Ibid., p.85.

[19]Ibid., p.144.

of his life: "Herr Prälat, glauben Sie daran, dass die Toten auferstehen?"[20] Immediately following this discussion Fred happens to see his wife and becomes conscious of the meaning of their love to his life: "Mit ihr verband mich etwas, was Menschen mehr verbindet als miteinander schlafen: es hatte eine Zeit gegeben, in der wir zusammen gebetet hatten."[21] The implication is that human love takes man to the threshold of divine love; for Böll this type of love and marriage is sacramental.

Fred's return to Käte and his family, to the same wretched living conditions and impersonal environment would be an unsatisfactory outcome on the level of Böll's purely social criticism. It can only be understood as a Christian solution to what is, as stated, the fundamentally Christian problem of this novel. It indicates a step towards acceptance of earthly suffering to a divine end. Fred is a passive hero who does not consider any form of active revolt against society, but simply comes to terms with his own existence.

Böll follows a pattern in portraying Albert and Nella in his next novel, Haus ohne Hüter, although materially more secure, as equally apathetic and withdrawn as Fred Bogner. These typical central characters of Böll's novels on post-war life are moody, uncommunicative individuals - symptomatic of their

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[20] Ibid., p.145.

[21] Ibid., p.147.

alienation from society. For Albert and Nella time is out of joint: for them the past is the time before the war and the present the time since. Besides this there is in their minds a potential time, "die dritte Ebene"[22] as Böll calls it. Nella, haunted by the memory of a turning point in her life when her husband was killed, cannot shake off the nostalgia for what might have been. For her, reality is meaningless and true experience is present only in her dream world. Albert's "third level" differs from Nella's in that Albert does not dream of a life "das nie gelebt worden war und nie mehr würde gelebt werden können."[23] Instead it consists of memory of what actually was, the happiness of his marriage with Leen before her death.

The centre of the novel is the gap left in the post-war lives of those left behind - relatives and friends - when the man who would have been head of the family died in the war. In the case of the Bach-family, as mentioned, Nella retreats into herself. It is a passive protest against the false values of milieu, the same people that killed her husband now idolise his name. This retreat represents the real world to her and for this reason she is able to assume a role in contemporary society. In public Nella plays the part of the poet's widow.

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[22]Heinrich Böll, Haus, p.97.

[23]Ibid.

Before the war Albert, who had been Rai's friend, lived in England with his Irish wife Leen, teacher at a girls' school. She had loved balloons and soap bubbles, just as she had hated provisions and wardrobes[24], and Albert had lived with her barely a year before she died. In this episode Böll conveys a sense of the transitory quality of beauty and innocence in this world. There is a similar figure in Frau Borussiak, who is described as pretty, pious and friendly[25], and who radiates a glow of gentleness and humanity. Even in the earlier novel Und sagte kein einziges Wort this figure is present in the girl from the cafe who unexpectedly spreads an air of happiness and warmth.[26] These people can do what the official church fails to do: bring spiritual comfort to the oppressed.

Broken by the sudden death of his wife and oppressed by the war, Albert attempts to resume his life as a professional artist. He does not forget the past, however, and considers it his duty to ensure that the young people understand what happened and remember: "'Und hier,' sagte Albert leise, 'wurde dein Vater getreten, geschlagen - wie ich -, vergiss es nicht.'"[27]

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[24] Ibid., p.95.

[25] Ibid., p.38.

[26] Heinrich Böll, Und sagte, p.28/29.

[27] Heinrich Böll, Haus, p.197.

In the figure of Frau Brielach Böll depicts the situation of another war-widow and victim of society, but on a lower social level. In contrast to Nella too, Frau Brielach is firmly planted in the present. Being still a young woman when her husband died, for a while she lived with a series of "uncles", who one after another abandon her. In the eyes of society she is considered an immoral woman. However, she is very poor, has to work for a living and she enters into every relationship hoping for the security of marriage and family life for her son Heinrich. It is for economic reasons and after calculating carefully the advantages for her children, that Frau Brielach finally and reluctantly decides to move in with a well-to-do baker whom she secretly despises.

The feeling of insecurity that weighs heavily on the boy Heinrich is illustrated frequently in the metaphor of walking on ice: " ... es war das Gefühl, auf Eis zu gehen, auf dünnem Eis über eine Wasserfläche, deren Tiefe unbekannt ist."[28] It is said of Heinrich that from the hour of his birth he was not spared a single day.[29] Böll has concentrated on him all the spiritual and material misery of numberless war orphans. He suffers from the contempt which his paternal grandmother shows for his mother's way of life and he suffers too from all the humiliation to which he is exposed as the son of a poverty-

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[28] Ibid., p.59.

[29] Ibid., p.11.

stricken and "immoral" war-widow. School is something unreal to him, the real things being prices for groceries, as he has to manage the household budget. He is prematurely aged under the pressure of circumstances, thrust at too young an age into the problematic world of adults.

The final humiliation comes for Heinrich when he and his mother are exposed to the open scorn of neighbours when moving their pathetic possessions to the house of the baker. Albert arrives at the critical moment, and in him there is finally a flicker of hope for the future situation of all three. Albert can be seen as a saviour-figure come to protect and rescue them, bringing order to their lives and to his own. For, as Haase points out: "Im Sinne der traditionellen katholischen Soziallehre ist die Familiengemeinschaft eine entscheidende Grundlage der gesamten gesellschaftlichen Ordnung."[30]

A utopian alternative to war-time and contemporary pressures of society is presented in the novel Billiard um halb zehn where Böll attempts to counterbalance the force of the symbolic "Sakrament des Büffels" (discussed in Chapter I, p.29) in the Christian symbol of the lamb,[31] taken from John XXI, xv: "Feed my lambs." Here he introduces a religious community, in fact a Christian sect, sworn to resist forces of evil: "'Wir sind

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[30] Horst Haase, "Charakter und Funktion der zentralen Symbolik in Heinrich Bölls Roman Billiard um halb zehn", in WB X, ii, (1964), p.219.

[31] Heinrich Böll, Billiard, p.39.

Lämmer ... haben geschworen, nie vom Sakrament des Büffels zu essen.'"[32] These are the innocent and defenceless, exposed to the hate and persecution of their environment. They are opposed to any manifestation of violence, such as fascism and war, and to the dangers of contemporary political and social power. They believe in the brotherhood of human beings[33] and practise this principle. For Böll they often become victims of society, are persecuted and sometimes tortured because their humane views clash with social and political trends for power, property and prestige. From their very nature then the "lambs" belong to the poor in material wealth; they are proletarian.

To this group of characters in the novel belongs Robert Fähmel's friend Schrella. As a school-boy during the Nazi era Schrella was consistently hunted down and beaten by Hitler Youth class-mates: " ... wir wurden verhört, mit der Stacheldrahtpeitsche."[34] In the war he was forced to flee from the "Büffel"-milieu into exile. Those "lambs" who stayed became victims: Ferdi Progulske was "executed" for a weak attempt at revolt against the regime, and Edith, Schrella's sister and later Robert Fähmel's wife, lost her life in an air-raid. The "lambs" are all portrayed as having an

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., p.186 & p.201.

[34] Ibid., p.40.

ethereal quality: "Er war ein Engel, hiess Ferdi ... ein Engel, dem das Lachen verboten war, Ediths Bruder."[35] The intention is that these figures are ideal and cannot exist in the real world.

Schrella finds on his return from exile that though externally a drastic change has taken place in society where the fascism of the past has been replaced by a democratic system of government in the Federal Republic of Germany, nothing has fundamentally altered. He describes the affluent Germany of the "Wirtschaftswunder" as "ein bisschen fett geworden."[36] As far as the people of that society is concerned, he feels the same fear as he did in the past, not simply because people like the ex-Nazis Nettlinger and Wakiera quickly adapted to contemporary society where they still assume important and powerful positions: " ... sondern weil es die anderen nicht gibt ... Die, die das Wort manchmal denken."[37] This "word", which he never utters, is the only thing that holds for Schrella any promise for a better world. We have a clue to its meaning when Böll has Schrella reiterate the question of the Sunday soap-box crank in Hyde Park: "Wenn ihr an ihn glaubt, warum tut ihr nicht, was er befohlen hat? ... Weide meine Lämmer."[38]

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[35] Ibid., p.104.

[36] Ibid., p.148.

[37] Ibid., p.227.

[38] Ibid.

These words may be seen as Böll's ultimate message in this novel to modern man and especially to the German Catholic. Schrella, who sees no place for himself and those of his kind, retreats once more into exile.

Robert's mother Johanna can be classified with the "lamb" group of characters. She is an orthodox Christian[39], who during the days of hardship of the past, acted selflessly by giving away food and trying to protect those exposed to persecution. Unlike her husband, whose life was a game and whose role got out of hand[40], Johanna was bold and outspoken against the war-time regime. She evaded death only by having herself committed to an asylum for the insane. Here she waits until the time is ripe for revenge on the murderers of the victims of fascism: "Ich werde es tun, werde das Werkzeug des Herrn sein."[41] She has then also withdrawn into voluntary exile from a society she cannot condone, where "eine Handbewegung das Leben kosten kann."[42]

In the figure of Robert Fähmel himself Böll portrays an alternative to society's values on a slightly more realistic level; though even here there is considerable doubt as to the

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[39] Ibid., p.89.

[40] Ibid., p.86.

[41] Ibid., p.118.

[42] Ibid., p.111.

nature of his future existence at the end of the novel. He is symbolically depicted in a figure closely allied to the lamb: the shepherd - and it is to him that Böll refers in Hölderlin's line: "Mitleidend bleibt das ewige Herz noch fest."[43] Even in their school-days Nettlinger had mockingly called after Schrella and Robert: "Wo ist denn unser Lämmchen mit seinem Hirten geblieben?"[44] He is Böll's Saviour-figure. He already had occasion to rescue Schrella from torture during a football-game in their school-days when he struck the ball so far that it brought the game to an end. Robert uses the word "Erlöser"[45] to describe his role in this episode. He consequently joined the ranks of the persecuted, fled into exile, and was captured and exonerated because he could be used. As a statics engineer he was forced to donate his services to demolition in war. He finally found opportunity to use this to his own advantage, however, by blowing up a cultural religious monument as an act of protest. That the abbey he demolished was his father's first architectural project which marked the beginning of Heinrich Fähmel's prosperous new life did not occur to Robert, and would not have mattered to him in any case.

Robert Fähmel is the first of Böll's "heroes" to make any

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[43] Ibid., p.46.

[44] Ibid., p.40.

[45] Ibid., p.36.

attempt at active protest, at revolt against milieu. His motive in blowing up the abbey was two-fold: first it symbolised the hypocrisy and cult of aestheticism within the church itself (as discussed in Chapter I), and secondly, he wanted to erect a monument of rubble to the victims of war, the forgotten "lambs" whom he had failed to protect from slaughter.[46]

In his disillusion and remorse Robert has withdrawn from human contacts into the world of mathematical formulae. In his daily "billiards at half past nine" he finds emotional and aesthetic satisfaction: "Musik ohne Melodie, Malerei ohne Bild."[47] Though still an orthodox Catholic attending mass daily, and though he still "works" for an hour or so in perfunctory fashion in the family architect business, Robert is almost a recluse, living on the brink of contemporary society. He is described as immaculate in appearance and correct in manner. Indeed his secretary finds him too perfect.

Robert's real life then is spent in retreat, playing billiards. This serves as a kind of time-machine, to carry him to the past and release a stream of memories addressed to his

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[46] Ibid., p.135.

[47] Ibid., p.30.

confidant, Hugo, page-boy of the hotel where he plays. Here again Böll stresses the importance of remembering the past. Like Schrella and Johanna, Robert keeps alive the memory of the victims of fascism; and like them he too cannot reconcile himself to his social environment: "Ich bin nicht versöhnt mit der Welt, in der eine Handbewegung und ein missverstandenes Wort das Leben kostet."[48] He feels the same sense of fear in contemporary society as Schrella on his return: "Ich frage mich bei jedem Menschen, ob ich ihm ausgeliefert sein möchte, und es gibt nicht viele, bei denen ich sagen würde: ja."[49] The persecutors of the past are now replaced by the present torturers of the boy Hugo: "Diese Leute waren es die Hugo quälten - vielleicht war auch einer von ihnen Ferdis Henker."[50]

Böll portrays Hugo as a modern-day "lamb":"'Du kannst nicht Ferdis Sohn sein und bist doch von seinem Geiste.'"[51] As a schoolboy - poor, semi-orphaned and neglected - he was mercilessly tortured (physically and spiritually) by the other students. Ironically Böll has them mock him with the nick-name "Lamm Gottes."[52] It is through the abused innocent Hugo that the crux of Böll's

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[48] Ibid., p.193.

[49] Ibid., p.143.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., p.226.

[52] Ibid., p.54.

criticism of milieu-Catholicism is given expression: "Wozu ist Christus gestorben, was nützt mir denn sein Tod ... , wenn sie jeden Morgen beten, jeden Sonntag kommunizieren und die grossen Kruzifixe in ihren Küchen hängen ...Was soll das alles, wenn sie mir jeden Tag auflauern und mich verprügeln?"[53] Hugo still remains persecuted at the hotel, this time by a materialistic pseudo-cult of "lambs" who wish to use him as their mascot on account of his pretty face.

Another potential "shepherd"-figure is portrayed by the character Enders in Billiard um halb zehn, one of the "others" referred to by Schrella as being so scarce. As a boy he did not join in the persecution of Schrella, and in later life he became a priest. He preaches Christian brotherhood and for this reason he is misinterpreted and even suspected of communist tendencies. He is stuck away in some remote area where he cannot be effectual, a fate which casts another significant light on the official church authorities. They distrust him for frequently using the Sermon on the Mount as text for his sermons. The simple people of his community cannot understand him as he preaches over their heads: "Enders würde die Lämmer weiden, aber man gibt ihm nur Böcke."[54]

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[53] Ibid., p.54.

[54] Ibid., p.229.

In his adoption of Hugo at the end of the novel Robert symbolically assumes the function of Saviour and shepherd in concrete reality. Through love of Hugo he finds his way back to society. Böll depicts the figure of the shepherd as having responsibility for the future. Robert spends his time at billiards keeping alive the details of the past and considering new formulae for the future. Schrella asks Robert if he has yet discovered this formula for the future: "Wirst du ihm die Formel geben können?"[55] Robert has the opportunity to take some positive action in the course of his business. For instance, one wonders how he will deal with the matter of the faulty calculations of a new military project. This remains an unresolved question at the end of the novel, whether Böll's hero will combine faith with deed, conviction with action.

The motto of the novel Ansichten eines Clowns is appropriately a passage from Isaiah quoted by Paul to the Romans: "Die werden es sehen, denen von Ihm noch nichts verkündet ward, und die verstehen, die noch nichts vernommen haben." For Hans Schnier, the clown, is the first of Böll's protagonists who is not a Catholic, who is in fact a Protestant agnostic with atheistic tendencies. Ironically the priest who quotes this passage[56] to Schnier is actually in disgrace, considered of unsound mind

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[55] Ibid., p.228.

[56] Heinrich Böll, Ansichten, p.196.

and ranked with the servants in the seminary in which he lives. That is, the voice of authentic Christianity is that of a reject inside the ecclesiastic institution. This is paralleled by the fate of the clown himself, who is from the beginning of the novel to the end considered a failure in the eyes of society.

Although some critics see this novel as nothing but a scurrilous attack on convention and routine Catholicism, as discussed in the previous chapter, here again it is the problem of human existence which concerns Böll. In the words of Schnier: "Merkwürdigerweise mag ich die, von deren Art ich bin: die Menschen."[57] Hans Schnier is a man who suffered a confusing boyhood in the war era. Opposed to violence, he naturally came into conflict with Nazism, which he even found present in his own mother. He left his comfortable, oppulent home out of protest. He later left school and became a clown out of the same kind of protest against milieu, against the ability of society to fall on its feet so quickly and adapt to new circumstances to their own gain (as satirised in the figure of Frau Schnier, discussed in Chapter I). Schnier is a naturally talented artist, a profession he chose in order to caricature the foibles of society. He does not belong to any clique of struggling pseudo-artists and he does not accept his father's

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[57] Ibid., p.239.

offer to go to a training school for comedians. He wishes to be independent of society, to live his art. His disposition is melancholy, a necessary ingredient for a clown: " ... die Melancholie eine toternste Sache ... "[58] For Schnier there is no leisure time, for art is his life, just as he feels a Christian should live his faith: "Ein Christus mit Feierabend wäre mir unvorstellbar."[59]

His crisis lies in his failure as an artist. The death of the clown is the end of the existence of the man Hans Schnier. This is brought about by his spiritual collapse when his common-law wife is persuaded to leave him for reasons of Catholic dogma. The soul affects the body: "'Mein Gott, der Mensch besteht doch aus Leib und Seele'".[60] Yuill refers to this as Böll's "awareness that man is a psychosomatic entity, that the sould inhabits a body and must express itself in a world that is physically real."[61] Schnier confesses that he is not religious[62] in the orthodox sense, but he demonstrates a similar naive quality to that of Fred Bogner in Und sagte kein einziges Wort. Through Schnier's conception of the nature of the human being, mundane things and actions can acquire a sacramental

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[58] Ibid., p.192.

[59] Ibid., p.104.

[60] Ibid., p.70.

[61] W. E. Yuill, op. cit., p.151.

[62] Heinrich Böll, Ansichten, p.8.

significance for him, such as eating, sleeping, bathing and sex. His love for Marie is monogamous[63] and love for Böll - as already discussed in connection with the Bogners - is never devoid of a sacramental element. Schnier's relationship with Marie is, in his view, a marriage. It is for him a sacrament as distinct from a ceremony, a communion of souls independent of social sanction.

Schnier sees it as the ultimate irony that the church broke up a natural marriage between himself and Marie and sanctioned an adulterous one between Marie and Züpfner: "'Sie treiben sie (Marie) in Unzucht und Ehebruch hinein.'"[64] In a fundamental sense Schnier is more truly Catholic than the Catholic dogmatists who despise him. As Sokel puts it: "For he, the infidel, holds the Catholic idea of the indissolubility of marriage."[65] The crux of the problem between Schnier and Marie had been the clown's refusal to get formally married, in keeping with his revolt against convention. For, whereas he could reconcile himself to a religious ceremony, his revolt is against the prerequisite state ceremony and the Catholic letter of the law in insisting that the children be raised in the Catholic faith.[66] He demonstrated a keen interest in the spiritual aspect of Catholicism under Marie's influence and even helped her through a

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[63] Ibid., p.183.

[64] Ibid., p.130.

[65] W. H. Sokel, op. cit., p.33.

[66] Heinrich Böll, Ansichten, p.74.

period of crisis in her faith: "Es fiel mir ein, dass sie es eigentlich mir verdanken, dass Marie katholisch geblieben ist."[67]

As long as Marie lived with Schnier, she was a happy, natural, practising Catholic: "Mit Marie war alles in Ordnung, solange sie sich Sorgen um meine Seele gemacht hat."[68] Under the pressure of the Catholic group, however, Marie is made to experience inner spiritual conflict and fear, leading to her flight. The Catholic characters rejoice in the victory of what Sommerwild terms "Übernatur"[69], Marie's "soul" having overcome her human "weakness". For Sommerwild the natural, things of the flesh, are associated with sin. Inasmuch as these things are a basic need of the human creature, though, they have something of the sacred for Schnier. In being concerned exclusively with spiritual laws, the Catholics paradoxically reveal themselves to be callous and inhumane. When Frau Fredebeul stubbornly refuses to tell Schnier where Marie is, he asks her to be human[70], and then sarcastically thanks her for so much humanity.[71] It is the non-believers, such as his agent Zohnerer, who treat Schnier with human kindness and consideration. Zohnerer understands the personal upheaval which caused the clown's alcoholism and professional failure and wants to give him the second chance

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[67] Ibid., p.223.

[68] Ibid., p.94.

[69] Ibid., p.128.

[70] Ibid., p.82.

[71] Ibid., p.83.

he deserves, to which Böll through Schnier remarks: "Die Kinder dieser Welt sind herzlicher als die Kinder des Lichts."[72]

The clown is already broken at the beginning of the novel. He gives vent to his anguish to various members of the Catholic circle on the telephone, this device being symbolic of alienation for many of Böll's characters. Schnier suffers most of all spiritually, but he also suffers from physical pain in a stage accident and, though the son of an industrial millionaire, he even at this point suffers acute poverty. His attempts to borrow money prove fruitless, even his father turning him down. His discovery that Marie is in Rome and married to Züpfner dashes any frail hope he may have had to attempt to win her back. The novel closes on a pessimistic note: the clown symbolically commits suicide. He puts on his make-up for the last time, takes up his guitar and goes out to beg at the railway-station: "Es war das Gesicht eines Selbstmörders ... das Gesicht eines Toten."[73] Hans Schnier the clown is destroyed, defeated at the hands of society which will not tolerate the integrity of one who will not conform.

In the figure Leni Gruyten of his next novel, Gruppenbild mit Dame, Böll continues and expands his clown's ideas on the

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[72]Ibid., p.250.

[73]Ibid., p.230.

human being as "Naturgeschöpf."[74] In contrast to Schnier, however, Leni - though vulnerable and hurt by the forces of milieu - remains indestructible at the end of the novel. Leni embodies Böll's ideal in human existence, a counter-type to the past fascistic and to the prevailing profiteering society. She is a synthetic figure personifying a utopian existence. To use Böll's own words: Leni exists in this novel "als Bild, als Vorstellung."[75]

Inasmuch as Leni concerns herself at all with existence, she regards it as a matter of fact. She knows no inhibitions as she has a natural attitude towards body functions. In this novel Böll takes the clown's reverence for the human acts of eating, sleeping and sex a step further to include the sphere of metabolism, which has been met with perhaps justified outrage by some critics as not belonging in the realm of literature: "Für Böll ist damit augenscheinlich ein elementarer Bereich von Sinnlichkeit verbunden."[76] The novel has also been criticised as lacking epic form[77] and its content reviewed by Reich-Ranicki in Die Zeit as : " ... der offenbar ewige deutsche Kitsch"; alongside this there is the more favourable

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[74] M. Durzak, op. cit., p.183.

[75] D. Wellershoff, op. cit., p.344.

[76] M. Durzak, op. cit., p.185.

[77] Ibid., p.192.

assessment of such people as Karl Korn[78] and Jost Nolte[79], to mention but a few, who have only superlative praise for what might be Böll's best book.

Here Böll is attempting to portray through Leni's behaviour a human being of natural integrity with no ambition for worldly wealth, power or status. As a school-girl she is described as so sensually aware that abstractions mean nothing to her and, though intelligent, she can only be taught through the medium of the senses. She demonstrates this sensuality to an extreme degree in her desire to experience the sacrament of communion. Her disappointment and disgust with the actual encounter, however, serves to crush any budding religious fervour. Leni's reaction to everything and everyone is spontaneous. She is portrayed as not simply someone who will not conform to milieu, but as a person totally unaware of it. Böll's attempt to create so naive a character is, I feel, questionable. On the one hand, Leni is depicted as sensitive and very sensually conscious of her own person, thirsty for experience and knowledge, - and yet she is ignorant that she is living under a fascist regime with its anti-semitic ideology, as demonstrated in her surprise at the fate of the Jewish nun Rahel, and later in her abortive attempt to acquire a copy of

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[78] Karl Korn, "Heinrich Bölls Beschreibung einer Epoche," in Frankfurter Allgemeine, (28. 7. 1971), p.28.

[79] Jost Nolte, "Das vielfache Nein des Heinrich Böll," in Die Welt der Literatur, (5. 8. 1971), p.4.

Kafka at the library. Rahel, as her biology teacher, exerted significant influence on Leni's interest in the human organism, leading in Leni's later life to her mammoth effort to reproduce the human retina with all its cells on a large wall-poster. In addition, Leni shows a mystical fascination for the secretions of the human body.

The other character in the novel important to Leni is Boris, a Russian prisoner-of-war whom she met while working at a nursery during war-time making wreaths. In a crucial episode Leni offered Boris a cup of coffee, which, Böll's fictitious narrator states, was not a deliberate display of humanity but an act to be seen only in the context of her existence.[80] It was natural for her to offer Boris coffee, as any stranger in the Gruyten home was always given this courtesy. Again Böll taxes the credibility of Leni as a totally unsuspecting character, as he depicts her as one who does not realize the implication of her action: that it was to say the least a dangerous thing to do. Nor can it be interpreted as an act of protest, a revolt against milieu. Leni simply exists, totally distant from milieu in a different sense from all the characters portrayed so far. Her action stems from natural generosity, the same generosity and naivety that caused her to squander her fortune during the war-years when she sold her house at an unrealistically low price and at the wrong time. Leni simply

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[80]Heinrich Böll, Gruppenbild, p.189.

does not see her environment and so it cannot affect her moral behaviour, so firmly is she entrenched in her "Seinsgewissheit."[81] Her action symbolically elevates the "sub-human" in the eyes of milieu to a human being.

Leni and Boris lived together in the turmoil of the immediate post-war period in the graveyard catacombs where a community grew around them reminiscent of the "lambs" of Billiard um halb zehn in that they are isolated from the rest of society. We learn that it is here that the communist Boris taught Leni how to pray[82], and it is here that their son Lev is born and baptised. This could be interpreted as symbolic of a new beginning for society.

Yet with Boris' unfortunate internment and death, Leni and Lev are left in difficult circumstances and exposed to victimization by society, a society against which Lev revolts. He is described as a deliberate under-achiever out of protest against a society where human worth is cold-bloodedly assessed by standards of achievement. As a result of his illegal activities, such as forging, he is even imprisoned. Leni - though she was only once married (briefly to Alois Pfeiffer, killed in the war) and had only one lover - is seen as a depraved

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[81] Ibid., p.51.

[82] Ibid., p.315.

woman by society, at whose hands she suffers abuse and humiliation. That she is a humane, generous and selfless person is borne out in her manner towards her tenants, consisting of the poor, manual workers and foreigners from whom she collects but a nominal sum in rent: "Sie war nun mal so herrlich proletarisch - vollkommen unfähig, das bürgerliche Profitdenken zu übernehmen oder gar zu praktizieren."[83]

So, in the world of automation, advance and profit, there is no place for Leni. She must be dispossessed by society. As Leni resists all her nephews' entreaties to move into a new luxury apartment, they finally arrange her eviction. It is at this point at the end of the novel that her tenants - some of whom are garbage-collectors, including her under-achieving son Lev - unite in a show of solidarity for the placid Leni, to block critical traffic routes and so prevent the bailiff's arrival.

As far as Leni herself is concerned, she has found a new marriage partner in one of her Turkish tenants and the implication is that she will now continue her idealized existence without regard to milieu. Böll conveys through Leni a human being of natural virtue with an inborn code of morality. Where Leni's values clash with those of society there is no inner

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[83] Ibid.

conflict. Confident in her own innate integrity as a human being, Leni ignores milieu. It does not exist for her, and therefore cannot disturb her or cause in her any desire for revolt. She regards people as human individuals, instead of categorising them as "society". It is in her son Lev and in the small community of immigrants surrounding Leni, that Böll suggests an important form of practical revolt.

In analysing the character portrayal of Böll's individual in his novels, it has been seen that Böll offers through this figure an alternative code of morality to the superficial and vacillating standards he detects in society. His sympathies are with the protagonist in his novels, the individual, who, as has been observed, is depicted by Böll as having an inborn moral code of more solid and durable structure than that of milieu to which he never conforms. For the individual's morality is fixed and never changes, based as it is on fundamental spiritual values which could be observed in meaningful human acts of kindness and compassion.

On examining Böll's individual, it has been found that he is usually a Catholic who finds it hard to come to terms with the lack of spirituality encountered both in the church and in society in general. As a result he finds himself forced to the periphery of society where he exists in perfunctory fashion, hoping for release or salvation. He usually belongs to the

"lower class" and is poor, is generally depicted as not too successful or efficient, and is never ambitious for personal gratification or material gain; in addition - and as a result - he is victimized by society. Nevertheless, he never questions his own natural integrity, and this integrity is never shaken.

Whereas Böll's earlier attitude to society - reflected in the behaviour of his protagonist Feinhals and Bogner - was one of passive acceptance of virtuous man's miserable lot on earth; in his more recent novels it has been found that Böll is advocating that man rebel against an unjust, soulless society to make possible Böll's ideal vision of mankind, depicted in the character of his individual of moral integrity.

CHAPTER III

CONFLICT SITUATIONS ARISING FROM DIRECT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN MILIEU AND INDIVIDUAL

As has been observed, it is a central concern with Böll to represent people's internal and external insecurity in war and post-war times. He portrays contemporary life, using the individual's struggle to exist as a vehicle for criticism. Attack on the "milieu-Catholics" (Chapter I) consists largely of opinions reflected by Böll's individuals of moral integrity (Chapter II). Similarly, in discussing the philosophies of these individuals which make possible their survival in contemporary society, it has been necessary to analyse the human being in his environment.

This chapter will serve to crystallize the existent conflict between society and the individual in Böll's novels by depicting the individual's reaction and response in selected crucial situations of direct confrontation with characters whose morality is influenced by milieu.

In the early war-novel Wo warst du, Adam? the concentration camp commandant Filskeit is finally confronted with the absolute in musical perfection in the person of the Catholic Ilona. Her physical beauty contradicts Filskeit's racial belief with regard to Jews. The ultimate crisis for him, however, in

addition to Ilona's artistic rendering and beauty of form, is in her spirituality. As a piece for her audition she chose the All Saints Litany and, despite the fear that Filskeit's distorted features instilled in her, she sang powerfully and ardently. It is, as Wirth[1] states, the combination of beauty and religious belief that proves Filskeit's undoing: "Schönheit und Grösse und rassische Vollendung, verbunden mit etwas, dass ihn vollkommen lähmte: Glauben. ... Katholische Juden? ... ich werde wahnsinnig."[2] In an ensuing insane rage Filskeit destroys the object of his own aesthetic passion, as he kills Ilona by his own hand and orders all the inmates of the camp killed, including his choir. In so doing, though, Filskeit is forced to destroy himself and Ilona has won a victory over him, as his ideology is destroyed by her faith.

Feinhals demonstrates a passive acceptance of fate in allowing himself to be separated from Ilona and carried along the path of war. He shows no fear, but an apathetic sense of resignation when he is discovered by the miliary sitting in a bar waiting for Ilona: "Feinhals zuckte die Schultern ..."[3] He submissively follows orders, and it is only at the end of the novel that he finally deserts from the army - which can be regarded as a form of weak protest. Feinhals interprets Ilona's

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[1] Günter Wirth, op. cit., p.61.

[2] Heinrich Böll, Wo warst, p.112.

[3] Ibid., p.80.

death as an escape from earthly existence. He feels that, supported by Ilona's love and faith, he could somehow have survived in the world. Without her, though, he will have to resort to what most people do: "die meisten Menschen pfuschten sich irgenwie durchs Leben, auch er würde es tun müssen."[4] He bitterly envies Ilona her release from earthly existence. Feinhals imagines that she felt it easier to die, that it was better not to get too old and build on a transitory love instead of an eternal one.[5] That Böll shares in this sentiment is suggested in Feinhals' ironical turn of fate at the close of the novel. He is deliberately shot down at the threshold of his own home by an overzealous compatriot who cannot stand to see the white flag of surrender. Death is a form of salvation for this passive hero who sees no hope in an earthly existence.

Käte in Und sagte kein einziges Wort feels hatred towards Frau Franke in her frequent and inevitably unpleasant encounters with her because she is hated and treated with contempt by a supposedly religious woman. This hatred is accompanied by Käte's even greater sense of fear: " ... der merkwürdige Glanz ihrer Augen ... flösst mir Schrecken ein. ... Die Tatsache, Gegenstand eines solchen Hasses zu sein, flösst mir Furcht ein, und ich habe Angst, den Leib Christi zu essen, dessen Genuss Frau

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[4] Ibid., p.153/154.

[5] Ibid.

Franke täglich erschreckender zu machen scheint."[6] At one point Käte revolted against Frau Franke's insults by spitting at her feet.[7] Later in the novel, however, after having sought counsel with the priest, Käte shows resignation towards her earthly lot in anticipation of heavenly joy after death. In a confrontation with Frau Franke at this stage she is able to receive Frau Franke's unpleasant innuendoes calmly and finally totally ignores her: "Und ich war erstaunt, dass ich keinen Hass mehr spürte."[8] The outcome is that, despite the forces of milieu, and apart from them, Fred and Käte will somehow manage to survive: "Es ist ja nicht für lange Zeit, Fred, für dreissig, vierzig Jahre noch, und so lange müssen wir aushalten."[9]

The confrontation in Haus ohne Hüter is first of all between Nella, Rai's widow, and Gäseler, his killer. Beforehand Nella is filled with feelings of anger, bitterness and revenge: " ... ich werde dich töten, werde dich zerschneiden, zersägen mit meiner Waffe, die schrecklich ist: mit meinem

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[6]Heinrich Böll, Und sagte, p.18/19.

[7]Ibid., p.115.

[8]Ibid., p.138.

[9]Ibid., p.125.

Lächeln, das mich nichts kostet ... es kostet mich so wenig, wie dich die Maschinengewehrmunition gekostet hat."[10] However, when she is actually brought face to face at last with the man responsible for her husband's death and her resultant meaningless life, not even the thought of revenge can stir Nella. She can no longer summon up the hatred she has nursed for so many years: " ... sie suchte vergebens den Hass auf Gäseler, spürte etwas anderes, Fremdes, kalt und unheimlich: Langeweile."[11] Gäseler looks young and ambitious, is attracted to Nella and anxious to please her. He has long since forgotten the incident of Rai's death as he has consciously made an effort to forget everything about the war - with the exception of the first names of generals.[12]

Ironically Gäseler does not even know that he is the one responsible for the death of the poet whose lyrics he now so fervently worships. So, he continues to abuse Rai even after his death by using Rai Bach's poetry to advance his own career. Nella had imagined Gäseler as the stereotyped villain: "Mörder waren nicht grausig, waren nicht schrecklich, gaben nicht

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[10]Heinrich Böll, Haus, p.33.

[11]Ibid., p.163.

[12]Ibid., p.168.

Substanz für Träume, für stimmungsvolle Filme her ..."[13] Therefore, her encounter with this polite,well-groomed, cultured careerist Gäseler arouses no kind of passion - "nur Gähnen."[14]

In contrast to that of Nella and her mother, Albert's hatred for Gäseler has long since evaporated, as he has tried to come to terms with his existence in society and, though not too successful at this, he does not live in a world of dreams like Nella nor a life of memory and wakeful revenge like the almost grotesque figure of the grandmother with her "Racheliturgie"[15], who intersperses questions about his father's murder with religious questions when testing Martin's knowledge of the catechism.[16] Upon hearing Gäseler's name again years later, Albert feels no hatred but is simply startled slightly: " ... jetzt erschrak er nur leicht."[17]

He reluctantly agrees to accompany the frantic grandmother to an encounter with Gäseler: "'... ich bring' ihn um, fährst du mit oder nicht?' 'Meinetwegen,' sagte Albert müde, 'wenn du dir was davon versprichst.'"[18] In recent years since

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[13] Ibid., p.201.
[14] Ibid., p.168.
[15] Ibid., p.31.
[16] Ibid., p.118/119.
[17] Ibid., p.156.
[18] Ibid., p.214.

the war the grandmother has used medical reasons to get her hands on a tranquilizer. After her confrontation with Gäseler she looks old, frail and exhausted and no longer play-acts, but demonstrates an acute need for a narcotic which brings peace to her life. The grandmother had tried to attack Gäseler with physical force and also those surrounding him, such as Pater Willibrord and Schurbigel who had tried to hinder her in her intent. Albert showed his solidarity by joining in with the old woman and making sure that Gäseler recognised who was giving him a beating. Though this is a step in the direction of protest, even here Böll implies that the forces of milieu are too powerful for the individual to contend with, as borne out in Albert's laconic comment: "Wir kamen nicht gegen sie auf."[19]

The same absence of hatred in a situation of conflict with his antagonists is experienced by the boy Hugo in Billiard um halb zehn while trying to escape his persecutors: " ... 'und wartete auf etwas, das ich nur dem Namen nach kannte: auf Hass. Ich hätte sie so gern gehasst, aber ich konnte nicht ... nur Angst."[20] Fear is in this novel the predominant emotion of all those characters in conflict with milieu-morality. Schrella felt the same fear in the same kind of situation as Hugo when a school-boy. On his post-war return from exile to his native land again he suffers the same kind of fear of his social

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[19] Ibid., p.219.

[20] Heinrich Böll, Billiard, p.53.

environment and this is well illustrated in his meeting with his childhood and war-time tormentor, Nettlinger. The Nazi Nettlinger of the Third Reich has become the democrat Nettlinger of the Federal Republic. Schrella sees his own release from false captivity (his name being mistakenly still on the wanted list) by Nettlinger in exactly the same light as his former imprisonment by Nettlinger. To Schrella it is an indication that Nettlinger is the same man, still in a position of power, the only difference being that the ideologies are different. He then served milieu as Hilfspolizei, whereas now he acts as Chief of Police. Schrella is startled every time Nettlinger flicks his cigarette lighter under his nose: "'Und deine Höflichkeit,' dachte er, 'ist schlimmer als deine Unhöflichkeit je war. Deine Beflissenheit ist die gleiche geblieben, es ist die, mit der du mir den Schlagball ins Gesicht geworfen hast und mit der du mir jetzt auf eine lästige Weise Feuer für meine Zigarette gibst.'"[21]

Böll portrays Nettlinger as more skilful than Schrella in the smallest details, even at opening the car-window when he ironically has Nettlinger state: "'Ich fürchte, ... die Luft, die da hereinkommt, ist nicht besser als die, die wir drin haben."[22] Nettlinger is skilful at manipulating people too. It was an easy feat for him to charm confidential information

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[21] Ibid., p.150.

[22] Ibid., p.151.

from the inexperienced, unsuspecting Leonore at the beginning of the novel: "'Nun, schönes Kind, sagen Sie schon, wo ich ihn finden kann.'"[23] His efforts come to nothing, however, when he confronts the experienced and incorruptible porter Jochen to try and gain admittance to Robert Fähmel at the hotel. No amount of threat or bribery can break down Jochen's stubborn loyalty and discretion as far as Robert's wish to remain undisturbed is concerned. Nettlinger is powerless in the face of the old man's polite steadfastness. Even at risk of losing his job Jochen stands firm: "'Nur über meine Leiche, Herr Direktor.'"[24]

Again, like a leitmotiv, Böll's words echo, this time from Schrella's mouth when he contemplates Nettlinger and the question as to why he returned: "Er blickte Nettlinger lange an und wartete, wartete immer noch vergebens auf das, wonach er sich seit mehr als zwanzig Jahren sehnte: Hass."[25]

Schrella allows Nettlinger to invite him to a meal for two very practical reasons: first, he is hungry and quite poor, and secondly, he has always disliked eating alone. It is not long before Schrella realizes his mistake in dining with the connoisseur and gourmand Nettlinger: "Beim Anblick des essenden

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[23] Ibid., p.11.

[24] Ibid., p.29.

[25] Ibid., p.152.

Nettlinger musste Schrella gegen ein elendes Gefühl der Rührung ankämpfen; er hatte Essen immer als einen hohen Akt der Brüderlichkeit empfunden."[26] Schrella's abrupt departure and, to Nettlinger's taste, indelicate table manners - in eating with his fingers in public and requesting the waiter to wrap up the remainder of his meal to take with him - are highly embarrassing for Nettlinger and interpreted by him as deliberate acts of vengeance: Schrella's way of getting even. Whereas in actual fact Schrella simply can no longer suffer what is to him an intimate act of sharing a meal with a man such as Nettlinger - and, as far as the food is concerned, he is a poor man and cannot allow food to waste.

There is no place for Schrella in a society of Nettlingers. Jochen's words of caution echo: "'Vorsicht; manchmal meine ich: die haben doch gesiegt. Trauen Sie dem Frieden nicht.'"[27] Schrella will not revolt. The question is whether Robert in his role of custodian of the future will do so for him. His mother, Johanna, emerges from the asylum for the insane seeing her role as that of an angel of vengeance. Significantly it is not at Nettlinger that she shoots, but at a prominent politician. This is a mere demonstration and nothing is achieved. Perhaps this is because Böll does not condone violence where the safety of human beings is concerned. Johanna's act is seen

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[26] Ibid., p.156.

[27] Ibid., p.153.

as that of a crazy woman and she is returned forthwith to the sanitarium.

As far as Robert himself is concerned, there is no direct confrontation between him and Nettlinger, but it is not difficult to imagine that Nettlinger's persistence will some day be rewarded by a meeting with Robert. Böll does not depict this confrontation, but merely implies that as Robert took positive action in protest in the past, he might do so again on his return from seclusion as Hugo's custodian and as keeper of the future. It is left an open question and the future prospect of a rebellion through Robert seems optimistic: "Der konnte Unrecht nicht ertragen, und wenn du Unrecht nicht ertragen kannst, bist du bald in der Politik drin."[28] It is also clear that Böll sees the need for social revolution confirmed in Johanna's act: " ... nicht Tyrannenmord, sondern Anständigenmord."[29]

It has been seen that the protagonist of Böll's next novel, Ansichten eines Clowns, also demonstrated his potential as a rebel early in life when he came into conflict with Nazism even in the immediate milieu of his home. Later, defying convention by leaving home and school, he built for himself an existence based on his love with Marie Derkum, the inspiration for his life as an artist. Then, as a clown, he made mild

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[28] Ibid., p.22.

[29] Ibid., p.215.

attacks on society by exposing its character in his acts. However, when Hans Schnier is introduced at the very beginning of the novel, his life is virtually already finished. Deserted by his love, his art deteriorates and he has no longer any raison d'être. In a state of crisis, he desperately clings to a frail hope that Marie will return - that is, that there will be meaning to his existence once more.

Schnier's conflict has largely already been discussed in preceding chapters, as the whole novel can be seen as the individual's conflict with milieu, where Hans Schnier struggles against its forces for his very existence. Embittered by its victory over him, Schnier attacks milieu morality in the only way he can. Confined to his apartment, Schnier uses the telephone as a weapon with which to disturb and annoy those whom he holds responsible for the destruction of his life. At the same time he hopes for a continued existence with Marie in discovering her whereabouts and winning back her affection.

In particular Schnier's quarrel, as mentioned, is with the "milieu-Catholics", as those directly involved in his collapse. Far from being a simple polemic against the church, the novel is in fact in the words of Paslick "a defense of existence."[30]

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[30] Robert Paslick, "A Defense of Existence: Böll's Ansichten eines Clowns", in GQ XLI (1971), p.698.

The main confrontations are represented through Schnier's telephone conversations with Sommerwild and Kinkel where Schnier takes issue with theological dogma which contradicts Christian doctrine. Sommerwild's condescension is apparent when he tells Schnier that though he is a good clown he understands nothing about theology. What Schnier does understand though is that the original purpose of man-made church dogma was to enforce the spiritual message of Christianity; and to Schnier it seems that the overriding power of dogma in the Catholic church of the twentieth century has contradicted its original purpose in losing its essence, the core around which it was constructed: "'Soviel verstehe ich aber davon,' sagte ich, 'dass Ihr Katholiken einem Ungläubigen wie mir gegenüber so hart seid wie die Juden gegenüber den Christen, die Christen gegenüber den Heiden.'"[31] Böll holds that law and order have their place, but that there is more to life than rules: "'Ordnung ist das halbe Leben - woraus mag die andere Hälfte bestehen?'"[32] There are situations in life where the human element necessitates the waiving of bureaucratic rules. Ironically, in the episode with Sommerwild, Böll has the villain recognise Schnier's integrity: "' ... das Schreckliche an Ihnen ist, dass Sie ein unschuldiger, fast möcht' ich sagen, reiner Mensch sind.'"[33]

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[31] Heinrich Böll, Ansichten, p.128.

[32] Heinrich Böll, Billiard, p.235.

[33] Heinrich Böll, Ansichten, p.133.

Hans Schnier's life - in his art - is dead. He symbolically commits suicide by abandoning his profession and turning to begging in the streets in keeping with his philosophy: "Ich glaube, dass die Lebenden tot sind, und die Toten leben"[34] - his dead sister, Henriette, being more alive to him than his living mother. Any other alternative to the fate to which he submits would have entailed his compromise with society - perhaps as a struggling young artist similar to those patronized by his mother, or some kind of social role which would involve the sacrifice of his individual integrity.

Here then Böll has presented a human being whose spirit and whose existence have been broken by narrow-minded, religious hypocrites. Unlike Billiard um halb zehn, Ansichten eines Clowns does not hint at revolution by political means. Böll instead is turning to the church first in the hope - in his criticism of it (through Schnier) - that it will reform itself by disassociation from standards outside its religious conscience, so providing a refuge and a model for society and a humane environment in which his individual can exist.

In the novel Gruppenbild mit Dame one cannot imagine an actual confrontation between Leni and social morality on account of Leni's essential nature. She exists as a human being in her

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[34] Ibid., p.29.

own right, as already discussed, and regards other people as human beings in their own right too. She is, however, sensitive and vulnerable to attack to the point where she is afraid to enter the street to do her daily shopping due to all the contemptuous and slanderous remarks hurled at her, such as "Russenliebchen."[35] She does not outwardly react to this and, though intimidated by her hostile social environment, she passively defies it by not allowing it to influence her natural integrity. There is then no open confrontation or exchange of views where Leni and society are concerned. She continues a style of life considered disreputable in the eyes of respectable society by living with a foreigner and bringing another illegitimate child into the world. Even her home is described as a house of ill-repute[36] in a newspaper story. Leni's attitude to life is contained in one of the few direct quotations we have of her: " ... wir müssen eben weiter mit irdischem Wagen, unirdischen Pferden weiterzukommen versuchen."[37] She unconsciously opposes the false standards of contemporary society by acting from spontaneous, instinctive purity of soul, at the same time regarding the human body which encases this soul with reverence. Leni, as stated, is Böll's ultimate human being, an idealized human absolute who is strong enough to exist despite society without being destroyed. She is a model and can exist only in

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[35] Heinrich Böll, Gruppenbild, p.376.

[36] Ibid., p.362.

[37] Ibid., p.373.

the imagination of her creator: "' ... es gibt sie, und doch gibt es sie nicht. Es gibt sie nicht und es gibt sie.'"[38]

In Lev Böll depicts the same mystical regard for the human condition as shown in Hans Schnier and Leni, but his character is more rounded and given the added ingredient of practical rebellion. In contrast to his mother, Lev is portrayed as someone whose whole life has been spent in a state of conflict with the forces of milieu. Böll attempts a psychological analysis of Lev's behaviour through the agency of his fictitious "expert."[39] Lev is described as having borne the brunt of social attack as a child in being verbally abused for being illegitimate, having a foreigner - and a Russian at that - for a father, in being the son of a prisoner, in having a depraved mother (in society's eyes) and finally mocked as being a "Gruftkind"[40], conceived among corpses. This final insult is the direct result of Catholic dogmatism where the church authorities found it necessary to open an investigation on Lev's birth as they considered his graveyard baptism by his father invalid and insisted on having Lev re-baptised against his mother's wishes.

As a form of compensation for his difficult social environment, Lev is simultaneously indulged by his mother and her friends

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., p.375.

[40] Ibid., p.376

at home. He proved a talented child, largely taught by his mother who kept him out of school as much as possible. Lev's illegal activities begin when he sees himself forced to steal the eucharist which is denied him. Reminiscent of Schrella, Leni's simple daily breakfast of fresh bread rolls has sacramental value for her, and this is communicated through her to her son Lev: "'Von da an ... kommunizierte ich nur noch mit meiner Mutter morgens beim Frühstück."[41] Following his expulsion from school, where he practised what Böll terms deliberate under-achievement[42], Lev demonstrates a compulsion for cleanliness in the house, yard, even the side-walk. This is interpreted as a feature of his polarization towards an environment that consistently abuses and defiles him. Where Lev practises under-achievement it is where achievement might bring some return; conversely, out of school where he sees his work as meaningful - and not a duty thrust upon him - he practises overachievement. Both these practices are signs of protest against society's standards. It is then in accordance with his nature that Lev seeks employment with the department of sanitation as a garbage collector (where he continues his practice of deliberate over-achievement), an occupation serving the purpose of cleanliness but which is regarded as dirty. Lev gravitates towards a class of "Fremde in der Gesellschaft"[43],

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[41] Ibid., p.380.

[42] Ibid., p.378.

[43] Ibid., p.382.

aliens like himself, including prison inmates, foreigners and garbage collectors, to whom he shows his solidarity and for whom he acts as spokesman. He is depicted as in a constant state of healthy tension with milieu.

In Lev one can detect something of the shepherd role of Robert Fähmel, but in Lev's case there is more boldness of spirit and open contempt for milieu. It is in Lev and in the solidarity of Leni's tenants that Böll makes plain the need for and the possibility of practical revolt in contemporary society. In the words of Arnold: "Bölls neuer Roman ist also durchaus politisch."[44]

By this examination of situations of confrontation between society and the individual, it has been found that in general the power of society is too strong for Böll's individual to contend with. He is intimidated, but not reduced to experiencing hatred which would conflict with his nature as depicted. However, he suffers humiliation, oppression and verbal - sometimes even physical - abuse in conflict situations with milieu; and is rendered helpless in the face of its authority. In his novels over the years, however, a development has been detected in Böll's attitude to the individual's earlier passive acceptance of the status quo. Böll seems to be advocating in his more recent novels the necessity for some form of active political

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[44] H. L. Arnold, op. cit., p.45.

rebellion with the goal of social revolution, which is seen by Böll as mankind's only hope for a meaningful existence.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent throughout his novels that Böll's aim in criticizing contemporary society is to provide a new environment in which his individual of moral integrity can find for himself a niche. To do this, new values must be instilled into the existent materialistic society he sees with its soulless and dehumanising process of mechanization.

Where Böll criticises the church, it is because he believes that the values he advocates ought already to be existent within the institution. As he sees it, though, these values are almost meaningless here where they have been allowed to stagnate in dogma rather than practised in daily life. Yet the church's capitulation to milieu is not total in the novels, for Böll still recognises humility and brotherhood in some minority members of the clergy, and this he uses to contrast sharply with the large majority of ecclesiastic representatives who allow themselves to be influenced by a secular value system. He portrays this, as we have seen, as the clergy's cult of religious aestheticism, status-seeking and political affiliation.

During the war-years this affiliation of the church to external social standards was more obvious, and Böll cannot forget this; nor does he allow the protagonists of his novels to do so. For he wants to prevent history from repeating

itself. He is disillusioned that the church did not examine its conscience and make a fresh start in the immediate post-war years instead of slipping into the same routine of conforming with secular standards of morality. Böll's attack on the church is so virulent because he fears, like Amery, that it is once again in the process of capitulation to external forces, whereas he believes it should be serving as a model and its values emulated by the rest of society.

The values Böll finds lacking in contemporary society are those he portrays in the character of the protagonists of his novels. They are not mere superficial virtues, such as obedience. For this is so dependent on external standards that it can turn into a vice if serving the purpose of evil, as witnessed when practised during the Third Reich. Amery draws a similar conclusion in quoting the words of Eichmann in defence of his war crimes: "Meine Schuld liegt in meinem Gehorsam. Gehorsam wird als Tugend gepriesen, und ich möchte daher darum bitten, dass nur die Tatsache meines Gehorsams in Betracht gezogen wird."[1]

Böll's individuals, as we have seen, display such traits as generosity towards others, understanding and compassion for others, even a feeling of warm affection for strangers. They show remarkable lack of hatred towards their antagonists, persecutors and torturers; Böll depicts an individual naturally

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[1] Carl Amery, op. cit., p.20.

geared towards other people in a warm, brotherly way. The hostile environment of the world, as portrayed by Böll, clashes so violently with the humanity of his individual that the weaker of the two, the individual, is forced in some way to succumb. As he cannot in all conscience conform, he becomes a pathetic, alienated and isolated figure.

It has been observed that in the early novels (Wo warst du, Adam? and Und sagte kein einziges Wort) Böll's individual holds out no hope for his earthly existence, must regard it as a cross to bear and looks towards death as a release from human suffering and gateway to an eternal life. However, a new development is evident towards the end of the novel Haus ohne Hüter, where the standard catechismal answer to the question of earthly existence is seen as insufficient: " ... aber dienen, lieben, in den Himmel kommen, diese Worte sagten nicht alles."[2] It is, therefore, not surprising that in his next novel, Billiard um halb zehn, Böll implies that man must take action to make this world he lives in a better place. He suggests the idea of some kind of active, political rebellion for social change to make possible the survival of mankind, as depicted by him, in a more humane society on this earth. He first takes issue with the church, for if the church does not reform and if even here inhumanity is encountered, then humanity will perish, as indeed

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[2] Heinrich Böll, Haus, p.219.

Hans Schnier symbolically did. Böll has much in common with his protagonist in Ansichten eines Clowns, the role of the artist in exposing the evils of society. It seems that after the obvious failure of his purpose with the public, and particularly, Catholic reception of this novel, Böll turns to a secular means for reform, where in Gruppenbild mit Dame he advocates most strongly a form of practical revolt against the Establishment by which means he hopes to convert society to a more humane basic attitude.

Böll advocates a costly revolution in terms of money, time and inconvenience - such as a massive halt to society's activity in the blockage of critical municipal traffic arteries. His is though, a bloodless revolution, and, in keeping with his principle of the inviolability of human life, Böll in no way sympathises with terrorist activities. Böll was accused of this following an article[3] he wrote challenging society's values and appealing for safe conduct, a fair trial and justice for the Baader-Meinhof group. The fact that he was so deliberately misunderstood and victimized by press and police again only serves to justify the need he sees for a social revolution.

With the birth of a new society and its more meaningful code of ethics, Böll's individual will no longer have to

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[3]Heinrich Böll, "Will Ulrike Meinhof Gnade oder freies Geleit?" in Der Spiegel, (10. 1. 1972).

experience fear. That this new world he contemplates is based upon Christian principles is implicit in his words: "Eine christliche Welt müsste eine Welt ohne Angst sein."[4] Böll's own morality is the corner-stone for that of the individual he portrays and this is firmly rooted in Christianity. Evidence of this is abundant throughout the novels, his early theme of life as a cross to bear in preparation for eternal spiritual salvation being a case in point. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew V, iii-xii), much referred to in Böll's work, extolls the virtues found present in Böll's "lambs": the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, the followers of righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted for righteousness' sake; and, as in Wo warst du, Adam? and Und sagte kein einziges Wort, the reward for these virtues practised on earth are promised "in heaven".

The very titles chosen for the novels Wo warst du, Adam? and Und sagte kein einziges Wort have a religious context, and the motto of Ansichten eines Clowns is a biblical verse. Moreover, the Gospel message of brotherhood and its condemnation of ambition, hypocrisy and riches as being dangers standing in the way of spiritual salvation, are reflected by Böll in the character of the individual he portrays and the society he sees respectively. These are but a few religious aspects selected

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[4]Heinrich Böll, "Eine Welt ohne Christus," in Was halten Sie vom Christentum, München, 1957, p.28.

to illustrate that the morality with which Böll is concerned has a Christian foundation.

Perhaps Böll's ideal of a Christian society can best be found in his idyllic description of Ireland with its almost classless society in which poverty is no disgrace and where piety is a way of life. In Ireland Böll sees no drive towards efficiency, wealth and social status, but a simple, almost bucolic life is portrayed. In Irisches Tagebuch Böll uses the all-pervading piety he finds in Ireland to contrast with the lack of spirituality he sees in the Catholic in his own land. In his vision of an ideal Catholic society might be seen his answer to the problems of the contemporary age. He depicts meaningful human relationships and a languid pace of life that he would like to see replace contemporary society's process of secularisation and urbanisation with all the pressures they bring in their wake. The advantages of contemporary society are, of course, overlooked by Böll in his criticism. For, without progress in the realm of technology, many facilities now taken for granted would disappear. One must realize, however, that Böll's portrayal is not intended to be taken too literally - it is his utopia: "Es gibt dieses Irland: wer aber hinfährt und es nicht findet, hat keine Ersatzansprüche an den Autor."[5]

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[5] Heinrich Böll, Tagebuch, foreword.

Christianity then can be regarded as Böll's moral criterion, and, reduced to its simplest formula, one of the fundamental principles of Christian doctrine is charity to one's fellow man: that is, humanity. Indeed Böll's Christianity is not always expressed in specifically religious terms and often reveals itself in what Coupe terms "an implied ethical attitude"[6] with which either believer or non-believer can agree. Böll's attitude need not be viewed from the Christian perspective, but merely on the level of humaneness - as is borne out in the humanity of the atheist Hans Schnier.

Admittedly his portrayal of the individual and also his vision of a new society are idealized, and one would hesitate to believe in the possibility that either could ever exist in reality. The importance of his message should not, however, be underrated. Alongside his undisputed artistic talent, there is the communication of his convictions through the medium of his art. Uwe Johnson, among others, holds the view that this area of literature has too long been ignored: "One reason why we're quite content with Mr. Heinrich Böll getting the Nobel Prize is that a certain function of literature has been acknowledged ... a function of communication."[7] Furthermore, Böll is at pains to state in one of his most factual novels that

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[6] W. A. Coupe, op. cit., p.242.

[7] Uwe Johnson, Interviewed on Portrait of an Artist: Heinrich Böll, CBC Radio, June, 1974.

literature has what he terms "einen popularisierbaren Mitteilungswert."[8]

Böll communicates through his art practical social revolution so the individual can exist in a humane society based on Christian principles of morality. Having traced the development of Böll's individual over a twenty-year period - from 1951 (Wo warst du, Adam?) to 1971 (Gruppenbild mit Dame) - a striking difference is seen between the passive acceptance and submissiveness of Feinhals and the active rebellion of Lev. The motive behind Böll's social criticism, as mentioned, is his fear for humanity. This is stated clearly in a passage from his novel Billiard um halb zehn: "Ich habe Angst, und die Menschen, die ich vorfinde, - täusche ich mich, wenn ich sie nicht weniger schlimm finde, als die, die ich damals verliess?"[9]

Böll would like to see contemporary society with its success and profit ideology disappear in favour of a humane, classless, profitless society.[10] Though he presents his idea of reform as a utopian model of resistance against social injustice, he firmly believes in the practical rebellion of

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[8]Heinrich Böll, Gruppenbild, p.362.

[9]Heinrich Böll, Billiard, p.228.

[10]Heinrich Böll and H. L. Arnold, op. cit., p.58.

modern man to free himself from a suffocating, soul-destroying milieu. It is only in this kind of social revolution that Böll holds out any hope for mankind: "Ich glaube, dass sie notwendig ist, unbedingt notwendig, und wahrscheinlich die einzige Möglichkeit für die Menschen, sich vor dem Faschismus, der Automation, der Computerwelt zu schützen."[11] He radically holds that the advanced technology of contemporary society is akin to fascism[12] in its dehumanisation process.

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[11] Ibid., p.56.

[12] Ibid.

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